

**THE HISTORY OF LIBRARIES IN HALIFAX AND  
HUDDERSFIELD FROM THE MID-SIXTEENTH  
CENTURY TO THE COMING OF THE PUBLIC  
LIBRARIES**

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## ABTRACT

This thesis explores the development of libraries and associated subjects such as the book trade in Halifax and Huddersfield and their environs as defined by Halifax parish and Almondbury, Huddersfield, Kirkburton and Kirkheaton parishes. Chronologically it covers a period of over three centuries from the mid-sixteenth century to the coming of the public libraries in Halifax in 1882 and in Huddersfield in 1898.

The **Introduction** outlines reasons for undertaking this study and includes a literature review. It is followed by six chapters. **Chapter 1** describes the economic, religious and educational background to the area to 1830. **Chapter 2** on writing, the book trade and libraries from the mid-sixteenth century to the mid-eighteenth century covers the development of bookselling and printing, Church of England and nonconformist libraries and school libraries. **Chapter 3** on the book trade and libraries from the mid-eighteenth century to 1830 comprises sections on bookselling and printing, reading and private collections, school libraries, book clubs, subscription libraries, newsrooms, commercial circulating libraries and libraries of churches, chapels and religious organisations. **Chapter 4** continues with the economic, religious and educational background for the second part of this study 1830-c.90. **Chapter 5** on secular libraries from 1830 to the coming of the public libraries includes bookselling and printing, reading and private collections, school libraries, subscription libraries, literary and philosophical society libraries and other special libraries, mechanics' institute libraries, factory libraries, commercial circulating libraries, newsrooms and co-operative society libraries. **Chapter 6** on

libraries attached to churches, chapels and religious organisations for the same period comprises sections on libraries of the Church of England, nonconformist chapels, the Society of Friends and Sunday schools. An **Epilogue** describes the introduction of public libraries in Halifax and Huddersfield, but their subsequent history is excluded. The thesis ends with a **Conclusion**.

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## INTRODUCTION

This thesis arose from a smaller study on the history of the Halifax Mechanics' Institution, which I carried out in the early 1980s and which was published in *Library History* in 1987 on "The Library of the Halifax Mechanics' Institution 1825-1857."<sup>1</sup>

I began reading secondary material and examining primary records in Halifax relating to the history of libraries in late 1981. I thought then that I might be able to write an article on libraries in Halifax. There was more material than I had expected and it soon became clear that there was far too much for a detailed study of all the libraries in Halifax to be covered in one article. I therefore selected one library: the library of the Halifax Mechanics' Institution. The history of mechanics' institutes has been a popular subject for study and both general works and studies of specific mechanics' institutes are numerous for the West Riding of Yorkshire. As minute books and catalogues are held in the Calderdale District Archives and Calderdale Central Library in Halifax, it seemed an appropriate choice. The Halifax Mechanics' Institution was formed in 1825 and was in existence for over a century until 1931. Even though I was only covering one library, because of the extent of the material, I decided to limit it chronologically to the earlier period 1825-57.

A few years after the publication of my article, I decided to extend my study of the library of the Halifax Mechanics' Institution to all the libraries in Halifax, which had been my original intention, and to write a thesis, which I started in 1993. I

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<sup>1</sup> Linda J. Parr, The Library of the Halifax Mechanics' Institution 1825-1857, *Library History*, 7(6), 1987, 177-86.

intended now to look not simply on libraries for certain occupations or classes, but all types of library with a wide range of contents and for all sections of the population. I had done earlier research on the history of medical and nursing libraries and therefore I changed my focus from occupational to geographical. This involved looking at libraries in a much wider context, as the library history of an area is inseparable from its economic, cultural, religious and educational history. This study therefore in addition to examining the evidence for libraries, also includes associated subjects such as the book trade and reading and attempts to place the libraries against the local background, as the history of libraries is to a large extent the history of the people who use them.

On a more practical level, I chose to limit my study geographically, because I was a part-time student with a full-time job in London. It was unrealistic in such circumstances to attempt to travel to different parts of England to collect material on one type of library, so I concentrated on one area. The primary records could be examined in one region only and much of the secondary material is available in London, notably local newspapers that are held at the British Library at Colindale.

I chose Halifax because it is part of my 'home locality': I come from Mytholmroyd, near Halifax. I had already written a library history article on the area and done some background reading, so it seemed sensible to build on previous work. There is a good local history collection at the public library in Halifax and well-organised archives.

From a wider reading of library history, I do not consider Halifax to be exceptional in the extent of its early libraries. The pattern of libraries was repeated



elsewhere and towns and regions with populations comparable to Halifax and Halifax parish had a similar range of libraries. Thus the history of libraries in Halifax comprises only a small fragment of the national picture. On a regional level Halifax shared the characteristics of other industrial areas, notably the West Riding of Yorkshire, which had many mechanics' institutes, co-operative societies and Sunday schools.

What is striking about secondary sources on the history of libraries both at national and local levels is the uneven coverage of different types of library. Libraries such as mechanics' institute libraries and public libraries are relatively well covered whereas others, for example, school libraries, commercial circulating libraries and Sunday school libraries have suffered comparative neglect. Many libraries may lack secondary accounts because of the absence of primary sources, whereas others may have been largely disregarded because their importance has been underestimated or overlooked. In writing the history of libraries in Halifax, I was concerned, as far as possible, to fill any gaps in coverage.

The church was important in education and in the provision of books and its importance is apparent in the study of books connected with it, from the 'treasures' of Church of England parochial libraries to tracts and Sunday school prizes. A significant development of the late eighteenth century was the rise of the Methodist church. The West Riding of Yorkshire was one of its strongholds. Methodism has attracted a lot of attention from historians and many records have been preserved. There was a high degree of religious diversity: the Baptist, Independent and Unitarian churches and the Society of Friends were represented in the area along

with the established church. Cathedral and parochial libraries have attracted interested scholars in contrast to the libraries of Anglican church institutes, of nonconformist chapels and of Sunday schools. Although this thesis is not concerned solely with church and chapel libraries, they form a substantial part of it. I am particularly interested in Sunday school libraries, which have been largely ignored or underestimated by library historians. Sunday school libraries were of vital importance in the education of children, especially from the working classes and must have had some impact on the growth of literacy. They have been largely overlooked because they were small. Each church or chapel usually had a Sunday school often with a library, but the picture is a fragmented one with many small libraries attached to many different churches. They held religious and other literature for children. They held little of lasting literary value, and few, if any survive.

Some libraries such as subscription libraries existed in their own right rather than being part of a parent body, so it is relatively straightforward to check for surviving records. Other libraries, however, were attached to churches and chapels and to educational bodies such as mechanics' institutes or schools or to literary and cultural societies, so the records of these institutions must be searched for evidence of libraries. Much information on libraries is 'hidden' in other records.

Where archival material has not survived, other primary sources can provide evidence for the existence of libraries: directories, government reports, but above all newspapers. Newspapers, particularly from the nineteenth century, are very detailed and give full accounts of the annual meetings of organisations and may be the sole



means of identifying some libraries. Overall the material is therefore scattered and requires a great deal of searching.

I decided to study the libraries not only in Halifax, but also in Halifax parish because there were several well-documented libraries outside the town itself: the Luddenden Library and several nonconformist Sunday school libraries. Moreover, most of the population of Halifax parish lived outside Halifax itself. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries parishes were not only ecclesiastical divisions, they also carried out many of the functions of local government. During the nineteenth century local government changed with the introduction of the municipal boroughs from 1835 and the Poor Law Registration Districts in 1837. Both civil and ecclesiastical boundaries also changed, but this thesis in relation to Halifax is broadly concerned with the area covered by the ancient parish. I later took the decision to include the neighbouring town of Huddersfield for purposes of comparison. Parishes were not uniform in either area or population. Halifax was far from typical being one of the largest parishes in England. It was 17 miles from east to west and covered 75,000 acres. John Watson in his *The History and Antiquities of the Parish of Halifax, in Yorkshire* published in 1775 compared Halifax parish to Rutland in size.<sup>2</sup> Daniel Defoe in his tour of Great Britain published 1724-6 wrote:

...if not the largest, certainly the most populous in England; in short, it is a monster, I mean, for a country parish, and a parish so far out of the way of foreign trade, courts, or sea ports.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> John Watson, *The History and Antiquities of the Parish of Halifax, in Yorkshire*, London: Lowndes, 1775; Reprint, Didsbury, Manchester: Morten, 1973, 1.

<sup>3</sup> Daniel Defoe, *A Tour through the Whole Island of Great Britain 1724-6*, London: Strahan, 1724-6; Reprint, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1971, 494-5.



Huddersfield parish in contrast was far smaller. I have therefore also included Almondbury, Kirkburton and Kirkheaton parishes. These four parishes which I will refer to as 'Huddersfield parishes', are, taken together, similar in size and population to Halifax parish.

Figure Int/I shows the position of Halifax and Huddersfield in the textile belt of the former West Riding of Yorkshire, situated immediately to the east of the border with Lancashire.

**FIGURE INT/I YORKSHIRE PARISHES AND CHAPELRIES PRE 1842  
(SOUTH WEST)**

*Yorkshire Ancient Parishes and Chapelries*, Leeds: Yorkshire Archaeological Society, 1973.

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**FIGURE INT/II HALIFAX PARISH TOWNSHIPS PRE 1842**

*The Ancient Parish of Halifax Divided into Townships*, Halifax: Calderdale District Archives, N.D.

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**FIGURE INT/III TOWNSHIPS, PARISH AND BOROUGH OF  
HUDDERSFIELD AND ADJACENT AREAS.  
NINETEENTH AND TWENTIETH CENTURIES**

Edward Royle, Religion in Huddersfield since the Mid-Eighteenth Century, *Huddersfield. A Most Handsome Town*, ed. E.A. Hilary Haigh, Huddersfield: Kirklees Cultural Services, 1992, 100.

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Figure Int/II shows the sub-division of Halifax parish into townships and Anglican churches and Figure Int/III shows the townships of two of the Huddersfield parishes: Almondbury and Huddersfield and one township from Kirkheaton: Dalton. The other townships of the four Huddersfield parishes which are not shown on the map were in Kirkheaton parish: Kirkheaton, Lepton and Upper Whitley and the



townships of Kirkburton namely Cartworth, Cumberworth Half, Foulston, Hepworth, Kirkburton, Shelley, Shepley, Thurstonland and Wooldale.

Although I have extended my study geographically, I have since found it necessary, because of the wealth of material, to limit the study chronologically. I had intended originally to write the history of the libraries of the area to 1914, but I have excluded the history of public libraries other than to describe their introduction and have therefore continued the history only until the 1890s.

## LITERATURE REVIEW TO 1993

Given the dispersed nature of the evidence for libraries and the importance of the economic, religious and educational background, I have included a wide range of primary and secondary sources in my bibliography, all of which I found useful or relevant. This review makes no attempt to cover more than a small proportion of the sources cited in the bibliography, but I have selected some of the more important ones. *Calderdale Archives 1964-1989* was published in 1990.<sup>4</sup> It includes a guide to the records of over 120 Methodist chapels within Halifax parish. These records are incomplete and some are simply registers of baptisms, marriages or burials or belong to a later period than that covered by this study; yet material on such a large number of chapels increases the likelihood of finding evidence of Sunday school libraries. The archives produce their own internal listings, but it is useful to have a published volume.

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<sup>4</sup> West Yorkshire Archive Service, *Calderdale Archives 1964-1989*, Wakefield: West Yorkshire Archives and Archaeology Joint Committee, 1990.

In addition to archival material, newspapers provide much information. Halifax had its own newspaper the *Halifax Union Journal* February 1759 to September 1760 and the *Halifax Journal* 1801-11. Before 1831 the *Leeds Mercury* from 1718 and the *Leeds Intelligencer* from 1762 included Halifax news. Since 1831 a Halifax newspaper has been issued on at least a weekly basis: the *Halifax Express* 1831-41, the *Halifax Guardian* from 1832 and the *Halifax Courier* from 1853 were the principal ones.

The Halifax historian, T.W. Hanson, in an article on local historical research published in 1942, recommends browsing in the *Transactions of the Halifax Antiquarian Society* and the diaries of Oliver Heywood.<sup>5</sup> Although this article was written some years ago, the advice is still pertinent. The Halifax Antiquarian Society was formed in 1900 and it is still a very active society. The transactions date from 1901. They are in the form of annual volumes comprising mainly papers or articles. The diaries of Oliver Heywood (1630-1702), an outstanding nonconformist leader, were published 1881-5.<sup>6</sup> They also make reference to his own library and publications. Other, later diaries also contribute to an understanding of social history, education and reading.

*The British Library English Short Title Catalogue* and *The General Catalogue of Printed Books* show that an unexpectedly high number of books were published in Halifax, but this is indicative of the flourishing book trade and shows

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<sup>5</sup> T.W. Hanson, Local Historical Research, *Transactions of the Halifax Antiquarian Society*, 1942, 3.

<sup>6</sup> Oliver Heywood, *The Rev. Oliver Heywood, B.A. 1630-1702: His Autobiography, Diaries, Anecdote and Event Books*, ed. J. Horsfall Turner, Vols. 1-3, Brighouse: Bayes, 1881-3, Vol. 4, Bingley: T. Harrison, 1885.



what was being read in Halifax rather than what was being published about Halifax. By 1836 four general histories on Halifax had appeared including John Watson's history published in 1775 noted above and John Crabtree's *A Concise History of the Parish and Vicarage of Halifax* published in 1836.<sup>7</sup> Thereafter the next general history of Halifax was T.W. Hanson's *The Story of Old Halifax*, in 1920, which was relatively brief and intended for the "boys and girls of Halifax."<sup>8</sup> There was therefore lack of an up-to-date general history.

The history of libraries in Halifax has not been neglected. A specialised book which is invaluable for this study is J. Horsfall Turner's *Halifax Books and Authors* of 1906, which as well as providing details on publications, also has a section on libraries.<sup>9</sup> Edward Green, Chief Librarian, Halifax Public Libraries, 1906-39, wrote an article entitled Local Libraries: their Origin and Progress in the "*Halifax Guardian*" *Historical Almanack*, 1911.<sup>10</sup> A 12-paged typescript written in 1972 on *The Development of Halifax Public Libraries* by Derek Bridge, former reference librarian of Calderdale Public Libraries, is held in the library in Halifax.<sup>11</sup> It is mainly concerned with public libraries, but provides information on earlier libraries. Although public libraries are relatively well covered in these two sources neither author makes any mention of Sunday school libraries. In addition, articles on specific libraries have appeared in the *Transactions of the Halifax Antiquarian*

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<sup>7</sup> Crabtree, John, *A Concise History of the Parish and Vicarage of Halifax, in the County of York*, Halifax: Hartley and Walker; London: Simpkin and Marshall, 1836.

<sup>8</sup> T.W. Hanson, *The Story of Old Halifax*, Halifax: F. King, 1920; Reprint, Guiseley: M.T.D. Rigg, 1993.

<sup>9</sup> J. Horsfall Turner, *Halifax Books and Authors*, Brighouse: Privately printed, 1906.

<sup>10</sup> Edward Green, Local Libraries: their Origin and Progress, "*Halifax Guardian*" *Almanack*, 1911, 75-93.

<sup>11</sup> Derek Bridge, *The Development of Halifax Libraries*, 1972.

*Society*: E.P. Rouse on the Halifax Circulating Library in 1911 and T.W. Hanson on the Halifax Parish Church Library in 1951.<sup>12</sup>

Interest in local history is not confined to recent publications: some older books have been reprinted. There must have been a sufficient market for these works, albeit small, to justify publication. John Watson's 1775 work was reprinted in 1973 and J.U. Walker's *Directory of the Parish of Halifax*, which he published in Halifax in 1845, was reprinted in 1991.<sup>13</sup> Similarly, J. Horsfall Turner's *The History of Brighouse, Rastrick and Hipperholme*, first published in 1893, was reprinted in 1985 in a limited edition of 750 copies.<sup>14</sup>

Several dissertations have been written mainly during the past 30 years either about Halifax or which have included Halifax. John Hargreaves: *Religion and Society in the Parish of Halifax c.1740-1914* Ph.D. is particularly useful for the religious background.<sup>15</sup> S.J.D. Green: *Religion and the Industrial Town, with Special Reference to the West Riding of Yorkshire c.1870-1920* is also of interest.<sup>16</sup> It covers the three towns of Halifax, Keighley and Denholme, but is partly concerned with the period beyond the chronological limits of my thesis.

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<sup>12</sup> E. P. Rouse, Old Halifax Circulating Library, 1768-1866, *Transactions of the Halifax Antiquarian Society*, 1911, 45-59.

T. W. Hanson, Halifax Parish Church Library, *Transactions of the Halifax Antiquarian Society*, 1951, 37-47.

<sup>13</sup> J.U. Walker, *Walker's Directory of the Parish of Halifax [1845]*, Halifax: Walker, 1845; Reprint, Krumlin, Halifax: Ryburn, 1991.

<sup>14</sup> J. Horsfall Turner, *The History of Brighouse, Rastrick and Hipperholme*, 1893; Reprint, Guiseley: M.T.D. Rigg, 1985.

<sup>15</sup> John A. Hargreaves, *Religion and Society in the Parish of Halifax c.1740 - 1914*, Ph.D., C.N.A.A., 1991.

<sup>16</sup> S.J.D. Green, *Religion and the Industrial Town, with Special Reference to the West Riding of Yorkshire c.1870-1920*, D.Phil., Oxford University, 1989.



Publication in 1988 of selections from the four million-word diary of Anne Lister (1791-1840) of Shibden Hall, Halifax in *I Know my Own Heart. The Diaries of Anne Lister 1791-1840* attracted national attention.<sup>17</sup> Although previous work had been done on the diaries, recognition of the part played by women in history and the growth of courses and publications in this area, particularly in the 1980s, has led to much historical re-assessment. From a library perspective her diary entries show what was being read by an educated upper class woman in the early nineteenth century and notes her visits to bookshops and the Halifax Circulating Library where she was one of the few women members.

Kirklees District Archives in Huddersfield is also part of the West Yorkshire Archive Service. *Kirklees Archives 1959-1989*, similar to the Calderdale publication, was published in 1989.<sup>18</sup> Fewer records of Methodist chapels are held than in Calderdale and as Kirklees covers a wider area than that chosen for this study, it further reduces the amount of relevant material. Nevertheless, there are still numerous records where evidence of chapel and Sunday school libraries may be found. Moreover, other nonconformist denominations including Congregational and Independent are also well represented.

The publication of newspapers came later to Huddersfield than to Halifax. The *Huddersfield Chronicle* dates from 1850 and the *Huddersfield and Holmfirth Examiner* from 1851. Like Halifax, the *Leeds Mercury* and the *Leeds Intelligencer*

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<sup>17</sup> Anne Lister, *I Know my Own Heart. The Diaries of Anne Lister 1791-1840*, ed. Helena Whitbread, London: Virago, 1988.

<sup>18</sup> West Yorkshire Archive Service, *Kirklees Archives 1959-1989*, Wakefield: West Yorkshire Archives and Archaeology Joint Committee, 1989.

can be used for the period preceding the issue of more localised newspapers. Huddersfield does not have the equivalent of the *Transactions of the Halifax Antiquarian Society*, which are an important source of Halifax history. Huddersfield was associated with the Yorkshire Archaeological Society formed in 1870, which originated in the Huddersfield Archaeological and Topographical Association founded in 1864. Yet despite its earlier historical interests, the Huddersfield Local History Society dates only from 1978.

In 1993 apart from the brief *The Story of Old Halifax* by T.W. Hanson dating from 1920, there had not been a general history of the town published since 1836. In contrast there are several nineteenth and twentieth century works on the history of Huddersfield. The first history of Huddersfield was not published until 1859 when C.P. Hobkirk wrote *Huddersfield. Its History and Natural History*.<sup>19</sup> A second edition was published in 1868. D.F.E. Sykes, *The History of Huddersfield and its Vicinity*, which appeared in 1898, is a detailed account.<sup>20</sup> More recently, Taylor Dyson wrote *The History of Huddersfield and District from the Earliest Times Down to 1932* with a second edition in 1951.<sup>21</sup> A further history in 1968 was Roy Brook's *The Story of Huddersfield*.<sup>22</sup> A number of histories of Huddersfield have therefore been published and they can serve both as general introductions or supply detail not easily found elsewhere.

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<sup>19</sup> C.P. Hobkirk, *Huddersfield. Its History and Natural History*, Huddersfield: B. Brown; London: Ward and Lock, 1859, 2nd ed., Huddersfield: Tindall; London: Simpkin and Marshall, 1868.

<sup>20</sup> D.F.E. Sykes, *The History of Huddersfield and its Vicinity*, Huddersfield: Advertiser Press, 1898.

<sup>21</sup> Taylor Dyson, *The History of Huddersfield and District from the Earliest Times Down to 1932*, Huddersfield: Advertiser Press, 1932.

Taylor Dyson, *The History of Huddersfield and District from the Earliest Times Down to 1951*, 2nd ed., Huddersfield: Jubb, 1951.

<sup>22</sup> Roy Brook, *The Story of Huddersfield*, London: MacGibbon and Kee, 1968.



In 1992 just before the commencement of my study another history was published edited by E.A. Hilary Haigh, *Huddersfield. A Most Handsome Town*.<sup>23</sup> This book has a thematic rather than a chronological approach. It comprises 26 contributions, which are separate studies. It does not aim to be comprehensive, but has the advantage of bringing together recent research by Huddersfield historians.

Substantial histories of neighbouring areas have also been published, notably by the Reverend Charles A. Hulbert, author of a number of religious works. Of particular local interest are *Annals of the Church in Slaithwaite (near Huddersfield), West-Riding of Yorkshire* published in 1864 and *Annals of the Parish of Almondbury, Part I* and subsequent volumes, which appeared 1880-2.<sup>24</sup> A further example is by Henry James Morehouse: *The History and Topography of the Parish of Kirkburton and the Graveship of Holme, including Holmfirth in the County of York*, published in 1861.<sup>25</sup>

Little has been written on libraries in Huddersfield and there is no Huddersfield equivalent of J. Horsfall Turner's *Halifax Books and Authors*. A small book produced in 1945: *Public Library Handbook. History of the Library Movement in Huddersfield* has references to early libraries, but it is necessary to depend almost entirely on primary sources for information on libraries.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> E.A. Hilary Haigh ed., *Huddersfield. A Most Handsome Town*, Huddersfield: Kirklees Cultural Services, 1992.

<sup>24</sup> Charles A. Hulbert, *Annals of the Church in Slaithwaite (near Huddersfield), West-Riding of Yorkshire*, London: Longman; Huddersfield: J. Brook, 1864. Charles A. Hulbert, *Annals of the Parish of Almondbury, Part I*, Huddersfield: Daily Chronicle, 1880.

<sup>25</sup> Henry James Morehouse, *The History and Topography of the Parish of Kirkburton and the Graveship of Holme, including Holmfirth in the County of York*, Huddersfield: Roebuck, 1861.

<sup>26</sup> County Borough of Huddersfield, *Public Library Handbook, History of the Library Movement in Huddersfield*, Huddersfield: County Borough of Huddersfield, 1945.

In common with Halifax, Huddersfield has a small market for historical reprints and particularly significant for library history is *Three Huddersfield Diaries*. A limited edition of 300 copies was published in 1990.<sup>27</sup> One of them was the diary of Arthur Jessop, who was closely connected with the Holmfirth Book Club, and it covers the period 1730-46. It was first published in *Two Yorkshire Diaries, Yorkshire Archaeological Society Record Series*, 1951.<sup>28</sup> Another of the diaries was first published as *Extracts from the Diary of the Rev. Robert Meeke* in 1874.<sup>29</sup> Robert Meeke, incumbent of Slaithwaite, 1685-1724, bequeathed most of his books to form the Slaithwaite library at St. James Church. The diary covering the years 1689-94, makes reference to his studies and his attendance at book auctions.

Both Halifax and Huddersfield have attracted specialised research, but interest in local history is not confined to a few scholars. Civic pride and concern with 'heritage' and the growth of the tourist industry has led to the publication of more popular works in the form of books of photographs, oral history and tourist guides.

Much has been published on library history on a wider level. The Library History Group of the Library Association has been in existence since 1962. It published the invaluable series *British Library History Bibliography* covering

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<sup>27</sup> *Three Huddersfield Diaries*, Holmfirth: Toll House, 1990.

<sup>28</sup> *Two Yorkshire Diaries*, ed., C.E. Whiting, *Yorkshire Archaeological Society Record Series*, 117, 1951.

<sup>29</sup> Robert Meeke, *Extracts from the Diary of the Rev. Robert Meeke*, London: Bohn; Huddersfield: Daily Chronicle, 1874.



publications of 1962-88, which has unfortunately ceased publication.<sup>30</sup> The journal *Library History* was started in 1967. Recognition of library history as a speciality in its own right therefore has been evident since the 1960s. This is not, however, to suggest that library historians should concern themselves only with literature specifically on this subject. The history of a library should be viewed against the economic, educational, cultural, social and religious background. Many entries in the *British Library History Bibliography* indicate that library history is not mere institutional history, but covers a wide range of literature, for example, the histories of schools and societies and studies of literacy and reading.

There has been a tendency for a number of articles on individual libraries to be published, but a lack of more general studies providing an overview. One example of a general history is Thomas Kelly's *Early Public Libraries. A History of Public Libraries in Great Britain before 1850*.<sup>31</sup> Despite its title, it interprets the term public library broadly and includes many early types of library. Although still useful, it was published in 1966 so does not incorporate more recent research.

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<sup>30</sup> Library Association. Library History Group, *British Library History Bibliography, 1962-1968*, ed. Denis F. Keeling, London: Library Association, 1972.  
 Library Association. Library History Group, *British Library History Bibliography, 1969-1972*, ed. Denis F. Keeling, London: Library Association, 1975.  
 Library Association. Library History Group, *British Library History Bibliography, 1973-1976*, ed. Denis F. Keeling, London: Library Association, 1979.  
 Library Association, Library History Group, *British Library History Bibliography, 1977-1980*, ed. Denis F. Keeling, London: Library Association, 1983.  
 Library Association. Library History Group, *British Library History Bibliography, 1981-1984*, ed. Denis F. Keeling, London: Library Association, 1987.  
 Library Association. Library History Group, *British Library History Bibliography, 1985-1988*, ed. Denis F. Keeling, Winchester, St. Paul's Bibliographies, 1991.

<sup>31</sup> Thomas Kelly, *Early Public Libraries. A History of Public Libraries in Great Britain before 1850*, London: Library Association, 1966.

For the history of particular types of library, theses can be consulted, for example, for newsrooms John B. Hood's 1978 F.L.A. thesis: *The Origin and Development of the Newsroom and Reading Room from 1650 to Date, with some Consideration of their Role in the Social History of the Period* and Margaret R. Marshall's 1970 F.L.A. thesis on industrial libraries: *The History of Industrial Libraries in Britain to 1960*, but these too were written some time ago.<sup>32</sup>

Louie Carr's thesis on *Libraries in Sunday Schools* is a M.L.S. dating from 1987 and includes examples from Huddersfield.<sup>33</sup> It helps to fill a gap in the literature on Sunday school libraries, yet it is more a starting point than a comprehensive account of the subject.

Some types of library are better researched than others and as up to date general histories are lacking along with recent histories of specific kinds of library, it is difficult to relate Halifax and Huddersfield to the national picture. From more general sources and from histories of individual libraries, it is clear that libraries were flourishing in all parts of the country. How did Halifax and Huddersfield relate to the rest of the country? Were they typical towns? Were their libraries average?

With such dispersed information and so many variations, it is difficult to make comparisons, but government and other reports can provide statistical information on a national or regional basis. Halifax and Huddersfield are similar to

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<sup>32</sup> John B. Hood, *The Origin and Development of the Newsroom and Reading Room from 1650 to Date, with Some Consideration of their Role in the Social History of the Period*, F.L.A., 1978.  
Margaret R. Marshall, *The History of Industrial Libraries in Britain to 1960*, F.L.A., 1970.

<sup>33</sup> Louie Carr, *Libraries in Sunday Schools*, M.L.S., Loughborough University, 1987.



other West Riding towns and industrial areas, but any conclusions drawn can only be tentative.

## LITERATURE REVIEW 1993-2000

There is an inevitable time lag between beginning work on a thesis and completing it and more has been published since I started my research. This is not a complete list of publications, but highlights some of the literature and materials, which are significant or are relevant to this study.

A supplement to the guide to *Calderdale Archives* was published in 1995 as *Calderdale Archives Supplement 1990-1994*.<sup>34</sup> Although records of Methodist churches are abundant, even more have been deposited since 1993, although most are from the twentieth century. From a library viewpoint some primary records of the Dean Clough Library 1859-65, which are an important source for the study of works' libraries in Halifax, have been added.

A long-awaited general history of Halifax appeared in 1999 entitled simply *Halifax*, by John Hargreaves.<sup>35</sup> A new series of the *Transactions of the Halifax Antiquarian Society* began in 1993. An article on the history of libraries in Halifax was published in 1999: *Libraries in Halifax from the Seventeenth Century to the Twentieth Century* by Derek Bridge. It is, however, an extended version of his 1972 typescript.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> West Yorkshire Archive Service, *Calderdale Archives Supplement 1990-1994*, Wakefield: West Yorkshire Joint Services Committee, 1995.

<sup>35</sup> John A. Hargreaves, *Halifax*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, Carnegie, 1999.

<sup>36</sup> Derek Bridge, *Libraries in Halifax from the Seventeenth Century to the Twentieth Century*, *Transactions of the Halifax Antiquarian Society*, New Series, 7, 1999, 38-50.  
Derek Bridge, *The Development of Halifax Public Libraries*, 1972.



S.J.D. Green's substantial book on *Religion in the Age of Decline. Organization and Experience in Industrial Yorkshire 1870-1920*, published in 1996, includes Halifax and is expanded from his 1988 D.Phil. thesis, noted earlier.<sup>37</sup>

In Huddersfield a supplement to the guide to Kirklees Archives appeared in 1995 as *Kirklees Archives Supplement 1989-1995*.<sup>38</sup> *Methodist Churches in Kirklees* outlining the history of past and present churches in the area, published in 2000, is also of interest.<sup>39</sup>

In 1999 Wharncliffe of Barnsley published *Aspects of Huddersfield* edited by Isobel Schofield.<sup>40</sup> Like the 1992 history of Huddersfield edited by E.A. Hilary Haigh, it covers certain 'aspects' in a thematic rather than a chronological way. It also has some similarities to the *Transactions of the Halifax Antiquarian Society* with several contributions in one volume. It is intended to publish further volumes.

A 1997 Ph.D. thesis by Jean Everitt *Co-operative Society Libraries and Newsrooms of Lancashire and Yorkshire from 1844 to 1918* provides much information on this important but neglected topic and covers libraries of this type in the Halifax and Huddersfield areas.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> S.J.D. Green, *Religion in the Age of Decline. Organization and Experience in Industrial Yorkshire, 1870-1920*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

<sup>38</sup> West Yorkshire Archive Service, *Kirklees Archives Supplement 1989-1995*, Wakefield: West Yorkshire Joint Services Committee, 1995.

<sup>39</sup> Kirklees Community History Service, *Methodist Churches in Kirklees*, Huddersfield: West Yorkshire Archive Service and Kirklees Community History Service, 2000.

<sup>40</sup> Isobel Schofield ed., *Aspects of Huddersfield*, Barnsley: Wharncliffe, 1999.

<sup>41</sup> Jean Everitt, *Co-operative Society Libraries and Newsrooms of Lancashire and Yorkshire from 1844 to 1918*, Ph.D., University of Wales, Aberystwyth, 1997.

The journal *Library History*, although still the journal of the Library History Group of the Library Association, became a commercial publication in 1998 and has expanded and become international in coverage.

Lastly, although my research does not cover the history of public libraries in Halifax and Huddersfield other than describing their introduction, mention must be made of Alistair Black's *A New History of the English Public Library. Social and Intellectual Contexts, 1850-1914*, which heralds a new approach to the writing of library history.<sup>42</sup> As the sub-title suggests the background is discussed in a cultural context.

In conclusion, a steadily increasing amount is being researched and published on the history of Halifax and Huddersfield and on library history generally. The year 1993 marked the beginning of my research, but it was not notable in historiography. Although styles of historical writing change and different aspects of history attract more attention than others do at various times, there is a great deal of continuity. The Halifax Antiquarian Society celebrated its centenary in 2000 and is in a flourishing state and its *Transactions* continue to be published. Issues of *Library History* have been expanded, but it has been the main journal on the subject in Britain since 1967. Older historical works, which have become part of literary history, have been reprinted. Dissertations, for example, by S.J.D. Green have often led to the publication of books. The quantity of historical material on Halifax and Huddersfield and on library history has led to specialisation: the

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<sup>42</sup> Alistair Black, *A New History of the English Public Library. Social and Intellectual Contexts, 1850-1914*, London: Leicester University Press, 1996.

*Transactions of the Halifax Antiquarian Society* with its separate articles and thematic books like *Aspects of History* edited by Isobel Schofield and the 1992 *Huddersfield. A Most Handsome Town* edited by E.A. Hilary Haigh. Specialised work is predominant and the trend is towards a thematic rather than a chronological approach. However, there is still a need for a general overview, which will be realised, in the forthcoming general history of libraries in Great Britain and Ireland edited by Peter Hoare.

Research in the form of theses is being carried out, but popular history is also thriving particularly in the form of books of photographs and more recently, videos. Library history is not simply an integral part of the history of education or the history of the book, but it cannot be considered as a separate discipline, to be studied in isolation: it needs to be placed in an appropriate social and cultural context. Library history is of interest not only to librarians, but also to library users and to students of social, economic, cultural and local history.



# CHAPTER 1

## ECONOMIC, RELIGIOUS AND EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND TO 1830

### 1.1 ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

#### 1.1.1 Economy

As might be expected of neighbouring parishes, Halifax and Huddersfield and their surrounding areas had many similarities. This is illustrated by Edward Parsons, who, commenting on Huddersfield in his work on the manufacturing districts of Yorkshire, published in 1834, stated:

The characteristics of the climate and soil, and the general face of the country, are so precisely similar to Halifax, that it would be useless to repeat the description.<sup>1</sup>

The economy of the entire area was largely determined by the geography. Figure 1/I shows the geology of the region. The geology of the area around Halifax and Huddersfield is millstone grit with a coalfield to the east and south east. To the west are the Pennines rising to heights of over 1,500 feet in the Blackstone Edge area. The River Calder and its tributaries in the Halifax area and the Colne and Holme, near Huddersfield make for a plentiful water supply. Both towns are relatively low lying; Halifax is situated on the Hebble Brook, a stream of the Calder, and is at the edge of the coalfield whereas Huddersfield is near the River Colne and on the

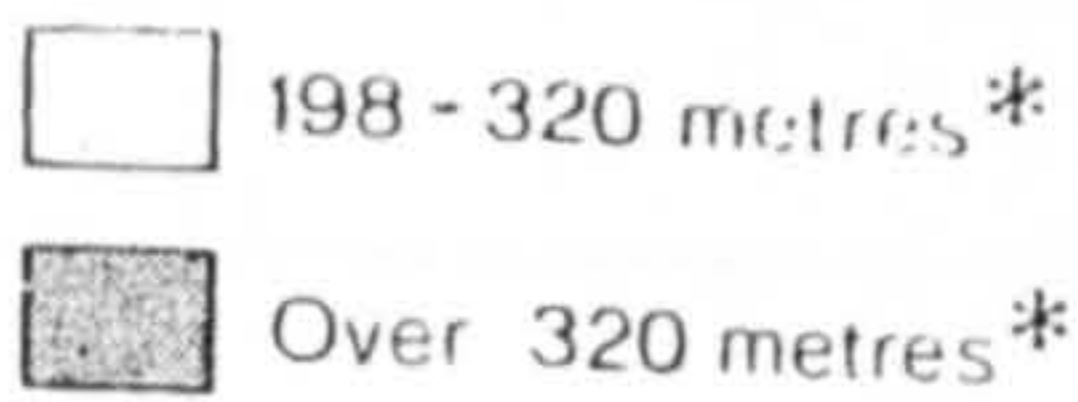
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<sup>1</sup> Edward Parsons, *The Civil, Ecclesiastical, Literary, Commercial, and Miscellaneous History of Leeds, Halifax, Huddersfield, Bradford...and the Manufacturing District of Yorkshire, Volume 2*, Leeds: Hobson; London: Simpkin and Marshall, 1834, 394.

coalfield itself. There are large stretches of waste and moorland, poor soils and heavy rainfall.

**FIGURE 1/I GEOLOGY AND RELIEF - WEST YORKSHIRE**

R.C.N. Thornes, *West Yorkshire: "A Noble Scene of Industry." The Development of the County 1500 to 1830*, Wakefield: West Yorkshire Archaeology Service, 1987, 1.



\*Heights above sea-level

The moors and mountainous terrain were unfavourable to arable agriculture and the population turned to cloth making for a living. Transport was on foot or horseback on steep tracks and later causeways. According to a petition from Halifax in favour of the Aire and Calder Navigation presented in 1698:

...they [the clothiers] have no water carriage within thirty miles, and much damage happens through the badness of the roads by the overturning of carriages.<sup>2</sup>

The landscape and poor communications accentuated the isolation and most people lived in scattered farmsteads and dwellings on the hills. From the thirteenth century cloth production was combined with agriculture in a 'dual economy.'

Figure I/II which is the 1775 map of Yorkshire by Thomas Jeffreys illustrated the nature of the terrain and the dispersed pattern of settlement.

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<sup>2</sup> Joseph Priestley, *Historical Account of the Navigable Rivers, Canals and Railways throughout Great Britain*, London: Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown and Green; Cary; Wakefield: Nichols, 1831, Reprint, London: Cass, 1967, 11.



**FIGURE 1/II THOMAS JEFFREYS - YORKSHIRE 1775**

Thomas Jeffreys, *The County of York Survey'd*, 1775.

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Cloth making took place in all parts of England, but by the fifteenth century was concentrated in the north and west. York and Ripon were the most important centres in Yorkshire, but by this time began to be overtaken by the West Riding of Yorkshire. Ulnagers' statements for Yorkshire for 1468-9 show that York was the most important centre with 1,596 cloths followed by Ripon. Halifax was in third place with 853 making it therefore the main centre in the West Riding, ahead of both Wakefield and Leeds. Almondbury with 160 cloths was sixth. By 1475 Halifax with 1,493 and a half cloths for two years 1473-5 had overtaken Ripon and was second to York. Almondbury with 427 was fourth.<sup>3</sup> The Halifax Act was passed in 1555, after a campaign by local clothiers against an Act of Parliament passed in 1552, which had forbidden the purchase of raw wool from middlemen and wooldrivers. The 1555 Act exempted Halifax from the provisions of the 1552 Act, thus demonstrating its influential position. The preamble to the Act underlines the economic importance of the woollen industry:

Forasmuche the Paryshe of Halyfaxe and other places thereonto adjoyning, beyng planted in the grete waste and moores, where the fertilite of Grounds ys not apte to bryng forthe any Corne nor good grasse, but in rare Places, and by exceedinge the greate industry of the inhabitantes and the same inhabitantes altogether doo lyve by clothe making...<sup>4</sup>

Contemporary accounts of travellers are of twofold significance: first, the mere inclusion of the Halifax and Huddersfield areas implies some recognition of their

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<sup>3</sup> Herbert Heaton, *The Yorkshire Woollen and Worsted Industries*, 2nd ed., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965, 75.

<sup>4</sup> M.T. Wild, *The Yorkshire Wool Textile Industry*, *The Wool Industry in Great Britain*, ed. J. Geraint Jenkins, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972, 199.

economic note. Second, they gave their impressions of the landscape and refer to the industry and wealth of the inhabitants.

Despite the growing significance of the Halifax woollen industry, John Leland on his tour of England 1535-43, mentioned Halifax only in relation to Bradford when he wrote:

Bradforde a praty quik market toun...It standith much by clothing,  
and is distant vi. miles from Halifax...<sup>5</sup>

He does not refer to Huddersfield or Almondbury. He writes more on the older established town of Wakefield in the West Riding and on the towns of the East Riding. In 1586, however, the antiquary, William Camden visited Halifax and wrote:

The industry of the inhabitants is also admirable, who notwithstanding an unprofitable, barren soil not fit to live in, have so flourished by the clothing-trade...that they are very rich, and have gained a reputation for it above their neighbours...<sup>6</sup>

Daniel Defoe wrote a famous description of Halifax:

...the nearer we came to Hallifax, we found the houses thicker, and the villages greater in every bottom; and not only so, but the sides of the hills, which were very steep every way, were spread with houses, and that very thick; for the land being divided into small enclosures, that is to say, from two acres to six or seven acres each, seldom more; every three or four pieces of land had a house belonging to it.<sup>7</sup>

Celia Fiennes in her journey through England around 1695 was reluctant to visit Halifax, "that ragged town". She was deterred because:

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<sup>5</sup> John Leland, *The Itinerary of John Leland in or about the Years 1535-1543 Parts IX, X and XI*, Vol. 5, ed. Lucy Toulmin Smith, Reprint, London: Centaur, 1964, 38.

<sup>6</sup> William Camden, *Britannia*, 4th ed., London: 1722, Vol. 2, 85.

<sup>7</sup> Daniel Defoe, *A Tour through the Whole Island of Great Britain 1724-6*, 491.



...its a stony town and the roads to it are soe stony and difficult yt I was Discouraged in going...<sup>8</sup>

John Wesley on his visits to the area referred to the hills as mountains, for example, for the entry for 25 April 1755 he wrote:

About ten I preached near Todmorden. The people stood, row above row, on the side of the mountain.<sup>9</sup>

From the mid-eighteenth century the Industrial Revolution transformed the economy. As a result of a series of inventions, industry was mechanised and the factory system superseded the domestic system. This marked a change in economic focus away from agricultural areas of the south to the industrial north and in Yorkshire, there was a change in economic emphasis from the East Riding to the West Riding. From being an area of relative insignificance, the West Riding became one of major industrial note; it also became more accessible through improved communication.

As Figure 1/III shows, canals became an important means of transport in the industrialising society of the late eighteenth century, as few rivers were navigable. Both Halifax and Huddersfield were joined by the canal network spreading from Hull and the North Sea to the east and the Irish Sea to the west.

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<sup>8</sup> Celia Fiennes, *Through England on a Side Saddle in the Time of William and Mary. Being the Diary of Celia Fiennes*, London: Field and Tuer; Simpkin and Marshall; Hamilton and Adams, [1695]; Reprint, New York: Scribner and Welford, 1888, 185-6.

<sup>9</sup> John Wesley, *The Journal of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M.*, ed. Nehemiah Curnock, London: Epworth, 1938, Vol. 4, 113.

**FIGURE 1/III TRANS-PENNINE CANALS AND CONNECTIONS C.1840**

R.B. Schofield, The Construction of the Huddersfield Narrow Canal, 1794-1811, *Huddersfield: A Most Handsome Town*, ed. E.A. Hilary Haigh, Huddersfield: Kirklees Cultural Services, 1992, 364.

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Roads also improved: the Halifax-Rochdale road linking the West Riding of Yorkshire to Lancashire was one of the earliest. The Halifax-Wakefield road via Bradford and Leeds in 1740 and the Halifax-Burnley road followed.

Halifax specialised in kerseys in the eighteenth century, but also by 1750 was the most important worsted area in Yorkshire. Herbert Heaton, the historian of the Yorkshire woollen industry, wrote:

The greatness of the town was twofold; it was alike a worsted and woollen centre. The demands for cloth for the troops in the various wars of the eighteenth century were met by the supply of Halifax kerseys, i.e. woollens... On the other hand the worsted trade was very considerable...<sup>10</sup>

In contrast, Huddersfield took longer to develop ascendancy, although Defoe in his tour of Great Britain 1724-6 was able to write:

Huthersfield is one of the five towns which carry on that vast clothing trade by which the wealth and opulence of this part of the country has been raised to what it now is...<sup>11</sup>

In 1795 John Aikin stressed the importance of the Huddersfield clothing industry to its economic development and described Huddersfield as:

peculiarly the creation of the woollen manufactory, whereby it has been raised from an inconsiderable place, to a great degree of prosperity and population.<sup>12</sup>

Edward Baines wrote in 1822:

A century ago, the population and opulence of Huddersfield did not amount to one-half of either Halifax or Wakefield, but it is now equal to the larger of them.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Herbert Heaton, *The Yorkshire Woollen and Worsted Industries*, 270-1.

<sup>11</sup> Daniel Defoe, *A Tour through the Whole Island of Great Britain 1724-6*, 484-5.

<sup>12</sup> John Aikin, *A Description of the Country from Thirty to Forty Miles Round Manchester*, London: John Stockdale, 1795, 552.

<sup>13</sup> Edward Baines, *History, Directory and Gazetteer, of the County of York, Vol. 1 West Riding*, Leeds: Edward Baines, 1822, 205.



Although Halifax continued to be one of the major textile centres of the West Riding of Yorkshire, by about 1830 it had lost its pre-eminence in the worsted industry. It was overtaken by Bradford, which adopted technical innovation and the factory system at a faster rate. Halifax had a long tradition of small independent clothiers working in the domestic system. John James in his history of the worsted manufacture in England in 1857 wrote:

But when the factory system began to be introduced into the worsted business, Halifax betrayed the same apathy to it, as Norwich did in more recent times, and thus the vantage ground, it had formerly, by great enterprise and labour, obtained.<sup>14</sup>

Halifax was near a coalfield, but had an incomplete canal system until 1828; there were also difficulties in transporting coal to upland areas. Huddersfield benefited from being on a coalfield, and had better canal links than Halifax for transportation of coal. Thus, by 1831 Huddersfield had emerged as an economic competitor to Halifax. It was increasing in prosperity whereas Halifax was in a state of relative decline.

### **1.1.2 Demography**

With industrialisation there was a population shift from the hills to the valleys, since factories were water-powered and built alongside rivers, so lower lying settlements in the valleys became larger in size and population than their counterparts on the hills. Thus, in Halifax parish, Hebden Bridge gained prominence over Heptonstall, Sowerby Bridge over Sowerby and Brighouse over Rastrick. Huddersfield benefited

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<sup>14</sup> John James, *History of the Worsted Manufacture in England, from the Earliest Times*, London: Longman, Brown, Green, Longman and Roberts; Bradford: Stanfield, 1857, 617.

at the expense of Almondbury as it was nearer the river. Holme on the hills was eclipsed by Holmfirth in the valley.

The population was not only redistributed by industrialisation, but also grew sharply. The first government census was carried out in 1801 and was taken thereafter at ten yearly intervals. As statistics show the population of England increased by 57.11% between 1801 and 1831. During the same period the population of the West Riding of Yorkshire increased by 72.73%, a far greater rise than the national average.

Figure 1/IV shows the population of the Halifax and Huddersfield areas in a national and county context. The population of Halifax, Almondbury, Huddersfield and Kirkheaton parishes increased at a higher rate than the West Riding average. Yet despite these significant gains, Leeds and Bradford were growing at an even faster rate.

**FIGURE 1/IV POPULATION STATISTICS 1801-31 - ENGLAND, WEST RIDING OF YORKSHIRE AND SOME WEST RIDING PARISHES**

House of Commons, Census of Great Britain, *Comparative Account of the Population of Great Britain 1801, 1811, 1821, and 1831, 1831*, (HCP348), XVIII.I, 316, 318, 321-4, 329, 407.

	1801	1811	1821	1831	% Change 1801-31
England	8,331,434	9,538,827	11,261,437	13,089,338	+57.11
Yorkshire (West Riding)	565,282	655,042	801,274	976,415	+72.73
Halifax parish	63,434	73,415	93,050	109,899	+73.25
Almondbury parish	16,983	19,302	23,979	30,606	+80.21
Huddersfield parish	14,848	18,357	24,220	31,041	+109.06
Kirkburton parish	9,626	11,480	13,559	15,731	+63.42
Kirkheaton parish	4,871	6,544	7,968	10,020	+105.71
Bradford parish	29,794	36,358	52,954	76,996	+158.43
Leeds St. Peter's parish	53,162	62,534	83,796	123,393	+132.11
Wakefield parish	16,597	18,474	22,307	24,538	+47.84



**FIGURE 1/V POPULATION STATISTICS 1801-31 - HALIFAX PARISH**

House of Commons, Census of Great Britain, *Comparative Account of the Population of Great Britain 1801, 1811, 1821, and 1831, 1831*, (HCP348), XVIII.I, 136, 321.

Township	1801	1811	1821	1831	% Change 1801-31
Barkisland	1,799	2,076	2,224	2,292	+27.40
Elland cum Greetland	3,385	3,963	5,088	5,500	+62.48
Erringden	1,313	1,586	1,471	1,933	+47.22
Fixby	346	336	345	348	+00.58
Halifax	8,886	9,159	12,628	15,382	+73.10
Heptonstall	2,983	3,647	4,543	4,661	+56.25
Hipperholme cum Brighouse	2,879	3,357	3,936	4,977	+72.97
Langfield	1,170	1,515	2,069	2,514	+114.87
Midgley	1,209	2,107	2,207	2,409	+99.25
Norland	1,181	1,316	1,665	1,618	+37.00
Northowram	4,887	5,306	6,841	10,184	+108.39
Ovenden	4,513	4,752	6,360	8,871	+96.56
Rastrick	2,053	2,442	2,796	3,021	+47.15
Rishworth	960	1,211	1,588	1,536	+60.00
Shelf	1,306	1,553	1,998	2,614	+100.15
Skircoat	2,338	2,823	3,323	4,060	+73.65
Southowram	3,148	3,615	4,256	5,751	+82.69
Sowerby	4,275	5,177	6,890	6,457	+51.04
Soyland	1,888	2,519	3,242	3,589	+90.09
Stainland	1,800	2,077	2,814	3,037	+68.72
Stansfield	4,768	5,447	7,275	8,262	+73.28
Wadsworth	2,801	3,473	4,509	5,198	+85.58
Warley	3,546	3,958	4,982	5,685	+60.32
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>63,434</b>	<b>73,415</b>	<b>93,050</b>	<b>109,899</b>	<b>+73.25</b>
Todmorden cum Walsden	2,515	3,652	4,985	6,054	+140.71
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>65,949</b>	<b>77,067</b>	<b>98,035</b>	<b>115,953</b>	<b>+75.82</b>

County and parish average population figures conceal wide regional variations and within the parishes themselves the population of townships increased at varying rates. Nowhere is this more clearly illustrated than in Halifax parish where the increase in population between 1801 and 1831 ranged from the smallest township

Fixby with 00.58% to 114.87% in the township of Langfield. The rate of increase in Halifax township was only 72.87%, slightly below the national average, for the parish and only twelfth of 23 townships. The increase in the township of Todmorden cum Walsden at 140.71% was particularly high.

**FIGURE 1/VI POPULATION STATISTICS 1801-31 - ALMONDBURY, HUDDERSFIELD, KIRKBURTON, AND KIRKHEATON PARISHES**

House of Commons, Census of Great Britain, *Comparative Account of the Population of Great Britain 1801, 1811, 1821 and 1831, 1831*, (HCP348), XVIII.I, 316, 322-3.

**ALMONDBURY**

Township	1801	1811	1821	1831	% Change 1801-31
Almondbury	3,751	4,613	5,679	7,086	+88.91
Austonley	674	814	968	1,420	+110.68
Crosland South	1,221	1,424	1,583	2,258	+84.93
Farnley Tyas	730	757	900	849	+16.30
Holme	302	347	459	630	+108.61
Honley	2,529	2,918	3,501	4,523	+78.84
Lingarths	642	712	809	758	+18.07
Linthwaite	1,381	1,643	2,127	2,852	+106.52
Lockwood	1,253	1,490	1,881	3,134	+150.12
Marsden (part of)	1,510	1,352	1,708	1,698	+12.45
Meltham	1,278	1,430	2,000	2,746	+114.87
Netherthong	679	787	927	1,004	+47.86
Upperthong	1,033	1,015	1,437	1,648	+59.53
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>16,983</b>	<b>19,302</b>	<b>23,979</b>	<b>30,606</b>	<b>+80.21</b>



**HUDDERSFIELD**

<b>Township</b>	<b>1801</b>	<b>1811</b>	<b>1821</b>	<b>1831</b>	<b>% Change 1801-31</b>
Golcar	1,846	2,122	2,606	3,143	+70.26
Huddersfield	7,268	9,671	13,284	19,035	+161.90
Lindley	1,377	1,686	2,040	2,306	+67.46
Longwood	1,276	1,461	1,942	2,111	+65.44
Marsden (part of )	448	493	622	642	+43.30
Scammonden	626	647	855	912	+45.69
Slaithwaite	2,007	2,277	2,871	2,892	+44.09
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>14,848</b>	<b>18,357</b>	<b>24,220</b>	<b>31,041</b>	<b>+109.06</b>

**KIRKBURTON**

<b>Township</b>	<b>1801</b>	<b>1811</b>	<b>1821</b>	<b>1831</b>	<b>% Change 1801-31</b>
Cartworth	997	1,121	1,211	1,796	+80.14
Cumberworth Half	854	898	1,120	1,180	+38.17
Foulston	1,128	1,139	1,264	1,573	+39.45
Hepworth	804	828	1,048	1,229	+52.86
Kirkburton	1,405	1,693	2,153	2,650	+88.61
Shelley	416	1,057	1,329	1,319	+217.07
Shepley	619	793	1,000	893	+44.26
Thurstonland	783	868	989	1,098	+40.23
Wooldale	2,620	3,083	3,445	3,993	+52.40
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>9,626</b>	<b>11,480</b>	<b>13,559</b>	<b>15,731</b>	<b>+63.42</b>

**KIRKHEATON**

<b>Township</b>	<b>1801</b>	<b>1811</b>	<b>1821</b>	<b>1831</b>	<b>% Change 1801-31</b>
Dalton	1,222	1,625	2,289	3,060	+150.41
Kirkheaton	1,469	1,690	2,186	2,755	+87.54
Lepton	2,180	2,585	2,729	3,320	+52.29
Whitley (Upper)		644	764	885	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4,871</b>	<b>6,544</b>	<b>7,968</b>	<b>10,020</b>	<b>+105.71</b>
<b>TOTAL FOR 4 PARISHES</b>	<b>46,328</b>	<b>55,683</b>	<b>69,726</b>	<b>87,398</b>	<b>+88.65</b>





Huddersfield township with an increase of 161.90% between 1801 and 1831 had the second highest increase in the 33 townships in the four Huddersfield parishes, which was in sharp contrast to the position of Halifax township within Halifax parish. Moreover, Huddersfield township with a population of 9,671 had overtaken Halifax township with 9,159 in 1811 and by 1831 the difference was more pronounced with Halifax township having a population 15,382 and Huddersfield township having a population of 19,035 providing evidence that Huddersfield was challenging the hitherto pre-eminent industrial position of Halifax.

## **1.2 RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND**

### **1.2.1 John Favour**

The teaching and administrative functions of the church made it central to most aspects of people's lives. The Church of England as the Established Church was predominant. Anglican clergymen were educated at Oxford and Cambridge universities. Their consequent social position and education made them leaders in the community. A sociological study which concentrates on the early nineteenth century identified 11 of their functions: leader of public worship, celebrant of sacraments, preacher, pastor, catechist, officer of law and order, almoner, teacher, officer of health, politician and clerk.<sup>15</sup> This list is not exhaustive, as they were also writers, scholars and founders and keepers of parochial libraries. Although the study refers to a later period, it clearly illustrates the involvement of clergymen in the life of the parish.

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<sup>15</sup> Anthony J. Russell, *A Sociological Analysis of the Clergyman's Role with Special Reference to its Development in the Early Nineteenth Century*, D. Phil., Oxford University, 1970, 3.

The influence that individuals were able to exercise was therefore considerable. This was particularly true of Halifax parish which, as we have seen, was relatively large being compared to Rutland in size.<sup>16</sup> It was roughly equal in area to four parishes around Huddersfield: Almondbury, Huddersfield, Kirkburton and Kirkheaton. An outstanding example of an influential clergyman was the Reverend John Favour (d.1623), Vicar of Halifax 1593-1623. It is claimed that he did more than anyone else to determine the social and cultural environment <sup>of the</sup> parish in the first half of the seventeenth century. Many charitable institutions date from the early seventeenth century and were associated directly or indirectly with Dr. Favour. A charter for the establishment of Heath Grammar School, Halifax had been procured in 1585 and the school was opened in 1600 largely on the initiative of John Favour.<sup>17</sup> According to tradition he was a good divine, a good physician and a good lawyer.<sup>18</sup> In the sixteenth century Protestantism was widespread nationally, but was associated with closely-knit weaving communities and ports.<sup>19</sup> Halifax was one such centre and the Puritanism of Dr. Favour was a manifestation of this trend. He regarded his local work as pastor and educationalist as secondary to his work against Roman Catholicism as he testified against Catholics in the church courts at York.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> See above Introduction.

<sup>17</sup> Alan Betteridge, Halifax before the Industrial Revolution. A Study of Local Administrative Records 1585-1762 Part Two, *Transactions of the Halifax Antiquarian Society*, 1979, 82.

<sup>18</sup> John Watson, *The History and Antiquities of the Parish of Halifax, in Yorkshire*, 467.

<sup>19</sup> A. G. Dickens, *Lollards and Protestants in the Diocese of York 1509-1558*, Oxford: Oxford University Press for the University of Hull, 1959, 347.

<sup>20</sup> T.W. Hanson, Dr. Favour as Protestant Disputant, *Transactions of the Halifax Antiquarian Society*, 1910, 301.

### 1.2.2 The Growth of Dissent

By the seventeenth century churches were breaking away from the established church. Presbyterian and Congregationalist churches were formed and certain strongly Protestant areas provided fertile ground for their foundation. One of the earliest Congregationalist churches in the West Riding of Yorkshire was started by the Reverend Henry Root in Sowerby, Halifax parish in 1645. In 1660 the monarchy was restored under Charles II and a period of persecution for nonconformists followed. Later the Toleration Act of 1689 led to the formation of more independent churches, particularly in Halifax parish.

One outstanding religious leader at this time of persecution was the Reverend Oliver Heywood (1630-1702). He was ejected from the living of Coley Church, Northowram in Halifax parish in 1662, but despite religious persecution he continued to preach and he founded the Northowram Presbyterian Church in 1672. His influence was not confined to one area. Most of the nonconformist congregations in a wide district owed their existence or continuance to his apostolic exertions. One of these churches was the earliest independent church in the Huddersfield area: Lydgate in New Mills, Kirkburton where a Presbyterian meeting house was licensed in about 1672. It became Unitarian in the eighteenth century.<sup>21</sup> The work of Oliver Heywood is covered more fully in Chapter 2.<sup>22</sup>

The Quaker movement started from about 1650 and was strongest in the North, South and West of England and certain large cities, such as London and

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<sup>21</sup> James G. Miall, *Congregationalism in Yorkshire*, London: John Snow, 1868, 310, 325-7, 363-4.

<sup>22</sup> See below 2.3.1.



Bristol. At this time its chief supporter in the West Riding was Captain Thomas Taylor (c.1629-84) of Brighouse. The early Quaker leader, George Fox, visited him and wrote in his journal in 1645:

Then I came again to *Thomas Taylor's* within *three miles* of *Halifax*, where there was a large Meeting of about Two Hundred People: amongst which were many *rude People*...They came in a very rude manner, and made a great Disturbance in the *Meeting*. The *Meeting* being in a Close, *Thomas Taylor* Stood up, and said unto them; If *you will be Civil, you may stay; but if not, I charge you to be gone from my Ground*. But they were the worse; and said they would make it like a Common: and they *yelled* and made a Noise, as if they had come to a *Bearbaiting*. And they *thrust Friends* up and down.<sup>23</sup>

Despite initial hostility, the meeting was a success and Brighouse, although only a hamlet in the seventeenth century, became a Quaker centre for a large area with its monthly meetings with delegates from Halifax, Bradford, Leeds and Huddersfield and further afield in places such as Settle, Skipton, Ilkley and Keighley.<sup>24</sup> Brighouse had a meeting house from 1681. After the Toleration Act of 1689 75 new meeting houses were built in Yorkshire during the next 50 years, including within Halifax parish, Highroad Well, Halifax and Shewbread, Todmorden in 1696 and Barkisland in 1724.<sup>25</sup> In the Huddersfield area in Wooldale, Kirkburton, a meeting house was in existence by 1689, but was part of the neighbouring Pontefract Meeting rather than the Brighouse Meeting. The Paddock Meeting in Huddersfield had its origins partly

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<sup>23</sup> George Fox, *Journal of George Fox*, Vol. 1, London: Thomas Northcott, 1694, 128.

<sup>24</sup> H. Travis Clay, Brighouse Quaker Meeting, *Transactions of the Halifax Antiquarian Society*, 1948, 19.

<sup>25</sup> W. Pearson Thistlethwaite, Local Quakers and their Meeting Houses, *Transactions of the Halifax Antiquarian Society*, 1986, 25, 27-9.

in the Wooldale Meeting. It was part of the Brighthouse Meeting from around 1770.<sup>26</sup> More appears in the Society of Friends and their libraries in subsequent chapters.<sup>27</sup>

Dissent had spread, but in 1743 according to Archbishop Herring's visitation returns the Church of England was still predominant, although dissenters were a substantial minority, particularly in Halifax parish. There were 6,200 householders in the parish. These included 300 Presbyterian families, 60 Quaker families, but "scarce any Baptists or Independents". In Huddersfield parish there were at least 1,100 families, of which about 100 were dissenting families and in Kirburton parish 900 families including 40 dissenting families: about 10 Presbyterian and 30 Quaker. However, there is a contrast with the other two parishes in the area. In Almondbury there were about 1,300 families, but only four families of Quakers and not much above the same number of Protestant dissenters. In Kirkheaton parish there were 496 families which included only one dissenting family.<sup>28</sup>

Dissent increased in the second half of the eighteenth century with the growth of the Baptist Church. Numbers were small until the late eighteenth century when Hebden Bridge, a town of growing importance following industrialisation, became a Baptist centre. It was later, in 1912, described as:

...the Mecca of Yorkshire Baptists. Probably no district in England had given us such a number of men, whose influence on Baptist history has been so potent and widespread.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> David Bower and John Knight, *Plain Country Friends. The Quakers of Wooldale, High Flatts and Midhope*, Wooldale: Wooldale Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, 1987, 140, 152.

<sup>27</sup> See below, 2.3.2, 3.8.4, 4.3, and 6.3.

<sup>28</sup> Archbishop Herring's Visitation Returns, 1743, ed. S.L. Ollard and P.C. Walker, *Yorkshire Archaeological Society Record Series*, Vol. I, 71, 1927, 15, Vol. II, 72, 1928, 30, 32, 113.

<sup>29</sup> W.E. Blomfield, *Yorkshire Baptist Churches in the 17th and 18th Centuries*, Yorkshire Baptist Association, *The Baptists of Yorkshire*, Bradford: Byles; London: Kingsgate, 1912, 98.



It is associated with two famous Baptist ministers: the scholar, John Fawcett (1740-1817), Minister of Wainsgate Church, near Hebden Bridge, 1764-77, and Ebenezer Church, Hebden Bridge 1777-1817. He was a prolific author. The Reverend Dan Taylor (1738-1816), founder of the Baptist New Connexion, was Minister of Birchcliffe, Hebden Bridge 1764-83.<sup>30</sup>

### 1.2.3 Methodism

Methodism was a significant feature of industrialisation and it became the predominant form of nonconformity in the nineteenth century. It was a movement within the Church of England until after the death of John Wesley in 1791. John Wesley began his mission in 1737. He made his first visit to Halifax parish to preach at Smith House, Lightcliffe in 1742 where the first Methodist society was formed. In 1746 he preached at Skircoat Green outside Halifax itself. His first visit to Huddersfield was not until May 1757, where his impression was:

Mon.9. - I rode over the mountains to Huddersfield. A wilder people I never saw in England. The men, women, and children filled the street as we rode along, and appeared just ready to devour us.<sup>31</sup>

He made subsequent visits to Halifax and Huddersfield, but other evangelical preachers and ministers are also notable, especially Henry Venn (1724-97), Vicar of Huddersfield 1751-71 and John Nelson (1707-24), a stone mason of Birstall, near Huddersfield. In the west of Halifax parish William Darney (d.1780), the itinerant Scottish evangelist, and William Grimshaw (1708-63), Vicar of Haworth, 1746-63, preached in the mid-eighteenth century. There was a schism in 1797 when followers

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<sup>30</sup> See below 1.3.3, 1.3.5, 3.1.2, 3.4, 3.5.1 and 3.8.1.

<sup>31</sup> John Wesley, *The Journal of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M.*, ed. Nehemiah Curnock, Vol. 4, 210.



of Alexander Kilham formed the Methodist New Connexion. The New Connexion was strong both in Halifax and Huddersfield. Other movements such as Primitive Methodism in Halifax in the 1820s developed later.

The content and style of preaching was all important in a society where most people were illiterate and received their knowledge from the Bible and religion from the pulpit rather than from reading. Famous and inspiring preachers therefore proved a great attraction and others such as William Darney with his plain style could appeal directly to the working people.

The organisation of the Methodist Church gave opportunities to members to take on the responsibility of being class leaders and local preachers. Many who were literate, but had only received a basic education or who were largely self-educated, were therefore supplied with a means of self-development, which may not have been possible in their daily employment.

#### **1.2.4 Religious Diversity**

What is striking about the early nineteenth century is the variety of means of religious expression, which was increased by the tendency for fragmentation within dissent itself. Every denomination had its following, which led to a choice in the means of worship. The Halifax and Huddersfield areas were strong in religious leaders and preachers such as Favour, Heywood and Venn and were visited by leaders of national prominence such as Fox and Wesley. Outdoor preaching and private religious meetings gave rise to the establishment of churches.

Some statistics exist, for example, membership of Methodist circuits, but there was no comprehensive survey of church attendance until the Religious Census

of 1851. In 1846, however, Edward Baines estimated the number of sittings in churches in the West Riding of Yorkshire. He divided the figures into sittings for the Church of England and churches and chapels of all other denominations. Some of his estimates for churches built before 1800 appear below in Figure I/VII.

**FIGURE 1/VII SITTINGS IN CHURCHES AND CHAPELS 1800 - WEST RIDING OF YORKSHIRE**

Edward Baines, *The Social, Educational, and Religious State of the Manufacturing Districts*, 2nd ed., London: Simpkin and Marshall; T. Ward, Leeds: Baines and Newsome, 1843, Table I.

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The Archbishop Herring returns of 1743 show that dissenters were a sizeable minority, as has been noted, but by 1800 only 52.11% sittings were in Anglican churches in the West Riding of Yorkshire illustrating the rapid rise of nonconformity in the second half of the eighteenth century. The figures also suggest a contrast between the Halifax and Huddersfield areas. Nonconformity was more prevalent in Halifax, which had a lower percentage of Anglican sittings than Huddersfield.



## 1.3 EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

### 1.3.1 Endowed and Charity Schools

Educational provision developed in a piecemeal manner dependent on bequests and donations. According to a survey of benefactions in the years between 1480 and 1660 in Yorkshire 31.12% of all charitable benefactions were given for educational purposes, which was more than for any other charity except poor relief. At this time York, Hull, Leeds, Halifax, Wakefield, Sheffield and Beverley possessed nearly a third of all charitable wealth in Yorkshire.<sup>32</sup>

Halifax in particular had a concentration of wealth: £1,735 1s in charitable endowments for education during this period. If Barkisland and Heptonstall are added, the amount is £2,345 1s. The highest figure for the West Riding of Yorkshire for educational endowments was £5,000 for Sherburn. Rotherham was second with £2,504 while Halifax with Barkisland and Heptonstall had the third largest figure. It was even ahead of Leeds with £2,053 9s and Wakefield with £1,794 11s. The earlier industrial development of Halifax compared with Huddersfield shows in the figures, as there was £343 8s for Almondbury and only £40 for Huddersfield.<sup>33</sup>

Many endowed schools were founded in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. A strong economy led to a greater degree of wealth for charitable purposes. Philanthropy was necessarily connected with religion so the Heath Grammar School, Halifax, opened in 1600, was founded on the initiative of the

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<sup>32</sup> W.K. Jordan, *The Charities of Rural England 1480-1660*, London: Allen and Unwin, 1961, 404, 407.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid*, 446-7.



Reverend John Favour to whom reference has already been made.<sup>34</sup> In the Huddersfield area the first grammar school, King James Grammar School, Almondbury was founded in 1609, as a successor of a previous school under the Tudors. The religious and Protestant allegiance of the school is evident from its statutes, the first of which was “No popish, profane, or immodest authors to infect the scholars with error or immorality”.<sup>35</sup>

Grammar schools were intended to teach Latin and Greek. The curriculum comprised mainly Latin and Greek grammar, prose and verse. Other subjects included arithmetic and writing, while the Catechism and New Testament were also taught. The statutes of 1730 for Heath Grammar School, Halifax show that the boys had to speak Latin and read the authors Cicero, Terence, Ovid, Virgil and Caesar. They also studied the Greek Testament and Hesiod or Homer together with Hebrew grammar. Classes in elementary logic were also provided.<sup>36</sup>

At a more elementary level charity schools were founded. Emphasis was on a 'Christian and useful education' and the curriculum was confined to the three Rs, sometimes with handicrafts.<sup>37</sup> This is illustrated by the will of Jane Crowther dated 18 January 1613 whereby money was left for the maintenance of a school and schoolmaster in Halifax:

who shall teach the children of the poorest people of the town of Halifax to read and learn their Catechisms, thereby to know their

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<sup>34</sup> See above 1.2.1

<sup>35</sup> Taylor Dyson, *The History of Huddersfield and District from the Earliest Times Down to 1951*, 352.

<sup>36</sup> Thomas Cox, *A Popular History of the Grammar School of Queen Elizabeth, at Heath, near Halifax*, Halifax: F. King, 1879, 22-3.

<sup>37</sup> M.G. Jones, *The Charity School Movement. A Study of Eighteenth Century Puritanism in Action*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1938, 22.

duties towards God, and enable them the better unto several services in the Church or Commonwealth.<sup>38</sup>

Much basic education was religious; there was great emphasis on learning the catechism, while Biblical and religious texts were used as aids to reading. So those who learned to read were able to read the Bible and read their catechism as well as learn it by heart. Education, however, consisted of more than teaching children their religious duties; it also equipped them for employment. A school in Elland, Halifax parish was set up by the will of Grace Ramsden dated 13 December 1734. By the terms of the will 24 poor boys were to be taught:

to read the English language, and write a plain, legible hand or character, and to understand common arithmetic, so as the said children may be thereby better qualified to gain a livelihood than the children of such poor parents usually are.<sup>39</sup>

The religious element of education was not overlooked for they were to be also instructed in the Christian religion, and to learn the catechism of the Church of England.<sup>40</sup>

Girls were excluded from grammar schools, but were often taught in charity schools. Even then they were taught different subjects from boys. According to the second endowment deed of Slaithwaite Free School, Huddersfield parish dated 25 December 1731, the boys were to learn to read and write and to learn arithmetic “sufficient to qualify them for common apprentices”. The girls were to be taught to read “except the master has a wife that can teach them to sew”. Both boys and girls learned the catechism.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> John Watson, *The History and Antiquities of the Parish of Halifax, in Yorkshire*, 586.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid, 570.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, 570.

<sup>41</sup> Robert Meeke, *Extracts from the Diary of the Rev. Robert Meeke*, 101-3



### 1.3.2 Catechising

Catechising took place both in the school and at home, but it was mainly carried out in church. There was a reliance on oral instruction as many people were illiterate, although copies of the catechism might be circulated amongst those who were able to read. By the early eighteenth century it was an established feature in the religious life of the young.<sup>42</sup>

Personal accounts such as diaries refer to catechising, for example, the Reverend Robert Meeke (1656-1724), Curate of St. James Church, Slaithwaite 1685-1724 founded the Slaithwaite Church library and noted his books and studies in his diary, which are described in Chapter 2.<sup>43</sup> He referred to catechising 24 May 1691 when he wrote:

Preached at home; began to catechize. There were two who had learned the *Exposition*, and said [it] very well.<sup>44</sup>

With only two catechumens, he continued:

Lord increase their number, and incline parents to instruct and command their children to keep the way of the Lord, as I exhorted them unto, from Genesis xviii, 19.<sup>45</sup>

Those who learnt their catechism 70 or 80 years later in Huddersfield were more numerous. John Venn wrote of his father, the Reverend Henry Venn, when he was Vicar of Huddersfield 1759-71:

He took great pains in catechizing the young persons in his congregation, chiefly those who were above fourteen years old. The number was often very considerable; and he wrote out for their use, a

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<sup>42</sup> Ian Green, *The Christian's ABC. Catechisms and Catechizing in England c.1530-1740*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996, 94.

<sup>43</sup> See below 2.2.3

<sup>44</sup> Robert Meeke, *Extracts from the Diary of the Rev. Robert Meeke*, 41.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, 41.



very copious explanation of the Church Catechism, in the way of Question and Answer.<sup>46</sup>

### 1.3.3 Self-education

Education was by no means universal and may have only lasted a year or two. Having attained the ability to read, however, men were then able to educate themselves. The Reverend John Fawcett, Baptist minister of Hebden Bridge, for example, must have received some education as his memoirs state that he had been early initiated in the common branches of learning.<sup>47</sup> They reveal a precocious interest in religion:

...he soon showed a taste for books, and read with eagerness such as came in his way, particularly Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress...He also read Bunyan's "Heavenly Footman," Alleine's "Alarm," and Baxter's "Call to the Unconverted"; the last two are admirably calculated to excite earnest inquiry about the best things. The other books which he perused were chiefly in the legal strain: among others, "The Whole Duty of Man," which, from the number of editions through which it formerly passed, must have had a most extensive circulation.<sup>48</sup>

The other major Baptist figure in Hebden Bridge, the Reverend Dan Taylor also read widely and had a "decided taste for mental improvement", although he worked in a local mine before he was five years old:

Every leisure hour that he could command was sedulously devoted to the acquisition of useful learning; and, so intent was he on this object, that he soon began to take a book with him into the coal-mine, and improved every occasional intermission of labour to enrich his mind...though labouring under great disadvantages, without instructors, and with little money to purchase books, his success was great...<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> *The Life and a Selection from the Letters of the Late Rev. Henry Venn, M.A.*, ed. Henry Venn, 4th ed., London: Hatchard, 1836, 51.

<sup>47</sup> See above 1.2.2.

<sup>48</sup> John Fawcett, *An Account of the Life and Ministry, and Writings of the Late Rev. John Fawcett, D.D.*, London: Baldwin, Cradock and Joy; Halifax: P.K. Holden, 1818, 7-8.

<sup>49</sup> Adam Taylor, *Memoirs of the Rev. Dan Taylor*, London: 1820, 3.  
See above 1.2.2.

These examples show not only what could be achieved by self-education, but also illustrate the opportunities offered by nonconformity to those of lower social origin, who could, in exceptional cases, become ministers.

### 1.3.4 Digest of Parochial Returns 1818

**FIGURE 1/VIII CHILDREN ATTENDING DAY SCHOOLS AND SUNDAY SCHOOLS. FREE AND FEE PAYING - ENGLAND AND WEST RIDING OF YORKSHIRE 1818**

House of Commons, Select Committee on the Education of the Poor 1818, *Digest of Parochial Returns, 1819*, (HCP224), Vol. III, IX-C, 224-5.

#### CHILDREN ATTENDING DAY SCHOOLS AND SUNDAY SCHOOLS

	Population 1811	Children	As a % of the Population
<b>ENGLAND</b>	9,543,610		
Day Schools		644,282	6.75
Sunday Schools		452,817	4.74
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>1,097,099</b>	<b>11.49</b>
<b>YORKSHIRE (WEST RIDING)</b>	653,315		
Day Schools		40,624	6.22
Sunday Schools		50,183	7.68
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>90,807</b>	<b>13.90</b>

#### CHILDREN ATTENDING DAY SCHOOLS. FREE AND FEE PAYING

<b>ENGLAND</b>	Free	Fee Paying
Endowed Schools	145,952	19,481
Unendowed Schools	168,064	310,785
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>314,016</b>	<b>330,266</b>
	<b>48.74%</b>	<b>51.26%</b>
<b>YORKSHIRE (WEST RIDING)</b>		
Endowed Schools	7,351	1,991
Unendowed Schools	8,482	22,800
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>15,833</b>	<b>24,791</b>
	<b>38.97%</b>	<b>61.03%</b>



By 1811 the population of England was 9,543,610 and 11.49% of the population were attending day or Sunday school. As the percentage is for the population as a whole: both adults and children, the number of children attending school would be higher than suggested by this figure. Furthermore, the percentages are taken from the 1811 census and by 1818 the population had grown. Many children were only able to attend school on Sundays because they were working during the week, particularly in industrial areas such as the West Riding of Yorkshire. As 61.03% of day schools in the West Riding of Yorkshire were fee paying, the poor were likely to be excluded from many of them. Yet school attendance in the West Riding of Yorkshire was relatively high and was above the national average; this was due to the number of children: 7.68% attending Sunday schools against a national average of 4.74%.

Returns for the Halifax and Huddersfield areas illustrate the variety of schools and their uneven distribution. In Halifax parish there were 12 endowed schools, grammar and charity, and the numbers taught ranged from six to about 95 in the case of the school at Hipperholme, which had 40-60 boarders and 20-35 day scholars. There were 10 endowed schools in the Huddersfield parishes. More children, however, attended unendowed schools. Religious organisations were instrumental in forming day schools through the Anglican National Society for the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church founded in 1811 and the undenominational Royal Lancasterian Society in 1808, which became the British and Foreign Schools Society in 1814. In Halifax township as many as 476 children were being taught in a National and a Lancasterian school. Other



unendowed schools were listed, but some were merely described as private schools or dame schools, for example, in Lightcliffe private schools consisting of about 70 children, and six dame schools in Rastrick. Further examples of different types of school are “three or four petty schools containing 230 children” in Honley, Almondbury parish. In Huddersfield “a few who were taught in private houses by poor women” and in Marsden, Huddersfield parish there was a school for teaching writing and accounts.<sup>50</sup> The Parochial Returns made the following observation on Halifax parish:

The poor of Halifax, Cross Stone, Lightcliffe, Illingworth, Ripponden, Sowerby and Sowerby Bridge are not without the means of instruction; but those of Coley-Elland, Heptonstall [and] Rastrick are in want of them.<sup>51</sup>

In the Huddersfield parish of Kirkburton, similarly “The poor were desirous of having more sufficient means of education” and in Almondbury parish:

The poorer classes of Honley and Meltham were without the means of education, though desirous to possess them.<sup>52</sup>

These examples illustrate the nature of schools and their uneven distribution. Even though schools were numerous, there were not enough to educate all children.

### 1.3.5 Sunday Schools

Sunday schools provided an alternative to day schools and more children attended them. They were popularised and publicised by Robert Raikes who founded schools in Gloucester in the early 1780s. In Halifax an early Sunday school was formed at

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<sup>50</sup> House of Commons, Select Committee on the Education of the Poor 1818, *Digest of Parochial Returns* 1819, (HCP224), Vol. II, IX-B, 1,134, 1,143-4,1,146,1,148-9.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid, 1,143.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid, 1,134.

Mixenden Congregational Church during the pastorate of the Reverend Thomas Evans 1764-79.<sup>53</sup> Heptonstall Methodists held classes in cottages before their chapel was built in 1764.<sup>54</sup> Later, in August 1784 the *Leeds Intelligencer* reported :

Sunday schools have commenced at Halifax and near six hundred children attended the parish church at that place on Sunday the 25th ult.<sup>55</sup>

The Sunday school movement in Halifax was given an impetus in 1792 when a committee of influential men set up 20 schools, but only two remained in existence by 1802. They were undenominational and had paid teachers in accordance with Raikes' scheme, but they failed here as they did elsewhere; in future schools were to be denominational, associated with individual churches, and to have voluntary teachers. Thereafter Sunday schools were founded or revived, one of the earliest being that associated with Square Congregationalist Church in 1804.<sup>56</sup>

Early attempts were also made to set up schools in Huddersfield according to Raikes' scheme. A letter to the *Gentleman's Magazine* in June 1784 reported:

...the inhabitants of Leeds have, very much to their honour, adopted the plan, and have already eighteen hundred children engaged.- The towns of Huddersfield and Dewsbury are likewise endeavouring to follow so meritorious an example.<sup>57</sup>

The Reverend Thomas Wilson, Curate of St. James Church, Slaithwaite 1777-1809, initiated Sunday schools in 1783, which were held at several places at private houses, by zealous and pious persons of his congregation.<sup>58</sup> Early attempts to form

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<sup>53</sup> James G. Miall, *Congregationalism in Yorkshire*, 318.

<sup>54</sup> E.V. Chapman, Two Hundred Years of Sunday Schools, *Transactions of the Halifax Antiquarian Society*, 1980, 2.

<sup>55</sup> Local News, *Leeds Intelligencer*, 31(1,575), 3 August 1784, 3.

<sup>56</sup> Calderdale District Archives, PU:179, Halifax Sunday School Union *Minutes 1830-50*.

<sup>57</sup> A Friend to Virtue [Letter], *Gentleman's Magazine*, 54(6), June 1784, 410.

<sup>58</sup> Charles A. Hulbert, *Annals of the Church in Slaithwaite*, 102.



Sunday schools were encouraged by the formation of two national societies based in London. The Sunday School Union was a teachers' organisation from 1812. The Sunday School Society gave assistance mainly to small country unions, but a school in Huddersfield received a grant. The Sunday School Union gave financial assistance to a school in Ovenden in Halifax parish and sent an adviser to reorganise Square Sunday School, Halifax. Most work, however, was done at a local level where local Sunday school unions were set up. On the advice of the national Sunday School Union, Halifax Union originated in 1819 with three schools comprising 101 teachers and 670 scholars. By 1820 it had seven schools. In Huddersfield the first Sunday School Union was started in 1817. By 1822 there were 20 schools in the Union, with 3,666 children and 959 teachers.<sup>59</sup>

A clear distinction cannot be made between what was taught at day schools and Sunday schools. Religion was taught at day schools and reading, writing and arithmetic were taught in Sunday schools. The idea of teaching religion on Sunday and mainly secular subjects on other days was not to come until later in the nineteenth century.

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<sup>59</sup> E.V. Chapman, *Two Hundred Years of Sunday Schools*, 7-8.  
Calderdale District Archives, PU:179, *Halifax Sunday School Union Minutes 1820-1850*.  
Edward Royle, *Religion in Huddersfield since the mid-eighteenth century, Huddersfield. A Most Handsome Town*, ed. E.A. Hilary Haigh, 130.



## CHAPTER 2

### WRITING, THE BOOK TRADE AND LIBRARIES FROM THE MID-SIXTEENTH CENTURY TO THE MID-EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

#### 2.1 WRITING, BOOK OWNERSHIP, BOOKSELLING AND PRINTING

The accession of Elizabeth in 1558 marked an increase in printed books and a wider range of subjects was covered than had been the case hitherto. Before 1558 there had been a little secular publishing, but after this date books on subjects as diverse as law, political, economic and social problems, astronomy, medicine, botany, genealogy and poetry were published.<sup>1</sup> It is from this date that there is increasing evidence of both reading and writing.

Halifax parish was associated with scholarly work. One gentry family closely connected with the Halifax area was the Savile family, who were settled in the Calder Valley, and rose into prominence in Tudor days serving both county and country. Sir John Savile (1545-1622) was born in Halifax parish and was a lawyer and steward of Wakefield Manor and became a Baron of the Exchequer in 1598. His brother Sir Henry Savile (1549-1622), also born in Halifax parish, was a scholar at Oxford University and Greek tutor to Queen Elizabeth I. Of his publications, the most famous was *S. Johannis Chrysostomi Opera, Graece*, an edition of the works

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<sup>1</sup> A.G. Dickens, *The Writers of Tudor Yorkshire*, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th series, 13, 1963, 60.

of Saint John Chrysostom published in 1613.<sup>2</sup> He also took a leading part in the translation of the Authorised Version of the Bible in 1611. He contributed to learning not only by his scholarship, but also by his wealth, as his interest in mathematics led him to found chairs in geometry and astronomy at Oxford. He gave a mathematical library for the use of the professors in Oxford, and left books and manuscripts to the Bodleian Library.<sup>3</sup> Another brother, Thomas Savile (d.1593), had a correspondence with William Camden, the antiquary, and some of his letters were published in *V. cl. Gulielmi Camdeni et Illustrium Virorum ad G. Camdenum Epistolae*, in 1691.<sup>4</sup> Camden appears to have been a friend of all three Savile brothers. Few members of the gentry could contribute so much and so widely to scholarship and the advancement of learning, yet many with no great intellectual talents had cultural interests, for example, John Kaye of Woodsome, near Huddersfield, was a rhymster who had at least one volume in print: *A Fatherly Farewell*, published in 1576.<sup>5</sup> The clergy were particularly noted for their learning and writings. In Halifax parish John Favour, who as we have seen in the preceding chapter, played a prominent part in the cultural and social life of Halifax, published a Puritan religious work, *Antiquitie Triumphant over Novelty*, in 1619.<sup>6</sup> He was, however, not the first Vicar of Halifax to become an author as John Taylor, Vicar

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<sup>2</sup> Henry Savile ed., *S. Johannis Chrysostomi Opera Graece*, Eton: 1613, 8 volumes.

<sup>3</sup> Rowland Bretton, The Savile Family, *Transactions of the Halifax Antiquarian Society*, 1968, 53. J. Horsfall Turner, *Halifax Books and Authors*, 7-8.

<sup>4</sup> William Camden, *V. cl. Gulielmi Camdeni et Illustrium Virorum ad G. Camdenum Epistolae*, London: Richard Chiswell, 1691.

<sup>5</sup> John Kaye, *A Fatherly Farewell*, 1576.

A.G. Dickens, *The Writers of Tudor Yorkshire*, 72.

D.F.E. Sykes, *The History of Huddersfield and its Vicinity*, 197.

<sup>6</sup> John Favour, *Antiquitie Triumphant over Novelty*, 1619.  
See above 1.2.1 and 1.3.1.



1521-c.33, had published a sermon on Luke Chapter 2, Verse 22, which he preached 2 February 1508.<sup>7</sup>

Some ministers wrote their own catechisms. Joseph Briggs (1639-1727), Vicar of Kirkburton 1662-1727, wrote two catechisms: *Catechetical Exercises*, in 1696 and *Catholick-Unity and Church Communion* in 1704, which was described as being “suited to the well-meaning country-man's capacity.”<sup>8</sup>

By the seventeenth century authorship was not confined to the gentry and clergy: men who were originally from the yeoman class also became authors and scholars as illustrated by the examples of Henry Briggs and John Tillotson born in Halifax parish. Henry Briggs (1561-1631) was born in Warley, and was a mathematician who made a significant contribution to the study of logarithms. He accepted the offer of the Savilian Professorship of Geometry at Oxford University in 1620 from Sir Henry Savile. Briggs had some correspondence with and obtained books for James Ussher, Archbishop of Armagh, who was instrumental in building up the library at Trinity College Dublin.<sup>9</sup> Even more startling preferment was achieved by John Tillotson (1630-94), son of a clothier in Sowerby. He was Archbishop of Canterbury 1691-4, an eminent preacher and the author of many published sermons.<sup>10</sup> Halifax was also associated with two novelists: Laurence Sterne and Daniel Defoe. Laurence Sterne (1713-68) lived in Halifax 1723-31

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<sup>7</sup> J. Horsfall Turner, *Halifax Books and Authors*, 46.

<sup>8</sup> Joseph Briggs, *Cathechetical Exercises*, Cambridge: Hayes, 1696.  
Joseph Briggs, *Catholick-Unity and Church Communion*, London: Monckton, 1704.  
Henry James Morehouse, *The History and Topography of the Parish of Kirkburton and the Graveship of Holme*, 68.

<sup>9</sup> D.M. Hallows, Henry Briggs, Mathematician, *Transactions of the Halifax Antiquarian Society*, 1961, 79-92.

<sup>10</sup> J. Horsfall Turner, *Halifax Books and Authors*, 11-17.



with his uncle, Richard Sterne, at Woodhouse Hall, Skircoat, Halifax and was probably educated at Hipperholme Grammar School.<sup>11</sup> It has been claimed that Daniel Defoe wrote *Robinson Crusoe* in Halifax.<sup>12</sup> Thus there is clear evidence of authors and scholars with Halifax connections. There are fewer examples from the Huddersfield parishes due to their later development. The possession of books or lack of them divided the educated from the uneducated. Books were the sign of the educated man. They were acquired for the purpose of study and book collections and private libraries were formed.

Wills are a primary source of information on book ownership, for example, Nicholas Hanson of Elland, clerk to Sir John Savile, left many books by his will of 1613. It reveals a wide range of interests:

...to the chapel of St. Matthew of Rastrick, he gives a book containing a *Hundred Sermons on the Apocalypse*; to his brother John Hanson, a manuscript *Bracton* in parchment. He had *the Acts and Monuments*, in two volumes, and the *Christian Warfare*, of which he makes special bequests. To his cousin Thomas Hanson of Brighouse, "such several books for song and scholarship as he and his brothers did chuse out of my books, which song-books cost me money"...and finally his *Fitzherbert's Natura Brevium* [sic] and some other law books he bequeaths to his cousin Mr. John Savile, the attorney.<sup>13</sup>

As early as 1477 the will of Thomas Wilkinson, Vicar of Halifax 1439-80, left to John Wilkinson one book "Legenda Sanctorum if he is a priest."<sup>14</sup> According to a probate inventory taken on the death of Dr. Richard Hook, Vicar of Halifax 1662-88, he had books in his study to the value of £100, which he left to his sons. A

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<sup>11</sup> Wilbur L. Cross, *The Life and Times of Laurence Sterne*, 3rd ed., New Haven: Yale University Press, 2nd ed., 1925 Vol. 1, 16-24.

<sup>12</sup> John Watson, *The History and Antiquities of the Parish of Halifax, in Yorkshire*, 470.

<sup>13</sup> J. Horsfall Turner, *The History of Brighouse, Rastrick and Hipperholme*, 235-5

<sup>14</sup> *Halifax Wills: being Abstracts and Translations of the Wills Registered at York from the Parish of Halifax. Part 1. 1389-1514*, ed. J.W. Clay, Halifax; Leeds: Privately printed, 1904, 20.

similar inventory taken after the death of his successor Edmund Hough, Vicar 1689-91, lists books in his study to the value of £70.<sup>15</sup> Hough left most to his son Nathaniel and a few to his wife. Ralph Thoresby, the antiquary, records on a visit to Halifax in August 1695:

August, 8 Forenoon, perusing the excellent Mr. Hough's library...<sup>16</sup>

It may have been John rather than Nathaniel Hough's library as Thoresby refers to John's marriage a fortnight earlier, so it could have been his library.<sup>17</sup>

Later in Almondbury the Reverend Carus Philipson, Vicar 1682-1706, had a library which by his will of 1703, he left mainly to his son:

I give unto him my globes and all my glasses, quadrants and mathematical instruments, and all my bookes in my library, except only such as his mother and sisters shall desire to make use of for their own private devotions, physick and cookery, which I give them.<sup>18</sup>

There are many references to private libraries. Joseph Ferrett (c.1599-1663) who was ejected from his living as incumbent of Heptonstall in 1662:

had a very good library which he refused to part with, although much straitened in his circumstances on losing his stated income.<sup>19</sup>

Substantial farmers of the yeoman class also owned books. Jonathan Priestley (1633-1705) of Soyland, Halifax parish, in his memoirs concerning his family relates that his aunt Grace Wood (d.1688) taught the servants and apprentices to

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<sup>15</sup> E. W. Crossley, Two Halifax Vicars. The Wills and Inventories of Richard Hooke and Edmund Hough, *Transactions of the Halifax Antiquarian Society*, 1904, 114, 118-24.

<sup>16</sup> Ralph Thoresby, *Diary of Ralph Thoresby, F.R.S.*, London: Colburn and Bentley, 1830, Vol. 1, 307.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, Vol. 1, 306.

<sup>18</sup> Charles A. Hulbert, *Annals of the Church and Parish of Almondbury, Yorkshire, Part 1*, 100.

<sup>19</sup> J. Horsfall Turner, *Halifax Books and Authors*, 81.



read. She had many good books and read much herself and is an early example of a seventeenth century woman owning and reading books.<sup>20</sup>

Although travel was difficult and slow there was much communication between those with similar interests. Diaries and letters provide ample evidence to show that educated people kept in touch through letters and social visits and by the informal lending of books.

By the sixteenth century bookselling and printing extended beyond London. Some printing was carried out in towns such as St. Albans, Canterbury, Ipswich, Oxford, Cambridge and York. There was a printer in York as early as 1497 and the first extant book dates from 1509.<sup>21</sup> The rest of the country followed slowly. It was not until 1679 that Halifax is known to have had a bookseller when Francis Bentley is mentioned in the diary of the Reverend Oliver Heywood. When his brother Nathaniel's book *Christ Displayed* was printed, Heywood bought 300, of which "Francis Bently stationers hath 112 to sell".<sup>22</sup> John Smith's *Doctrine of the Church of England* was printed for Bentley in 1694.<sup>23</sup> Several entries in the early churchwardens' accounts of Halifax Parish Church refer to purchases of books from Francis Bentley, for example, 9 July 1683, "paid Francis Bentley... books 8s 0d."<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Jonathan Priestley, *Some Memoirs concerning the Family of the Priestleys, Written at the Request of a Friend*, by Jonathan Priestley, Anno Domini 1696, Aetatis Suae 63, *Yorkshire Diaries and Autobiographies, in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries, Publications of the Surtees Society*, 77, 1886, 16, 31.

<sup>21</sup> W.K. and E.M. Sessions, *Printing in York from the 1490s to the Present Day*, York: Sessions, 1976, 1, 8.

<sup>22</sup> Oliver, *The Rev. Oliver Heywood, B.A. 1630-1702*, Vol. 2, 213.  
Nathaniel Heywood, *Christ Displayed, as the Choicest Gift, and Best Master...Being Some of the Last Sermons Preached by...N. Heywood*, London: For Thomas Parkhurst, 1679.

<sup>23</sup> H. Ling Roth, *Odd Notes on Halifax Booksellers and Printers*, *Halifax Courier*, 9,428, 28 August 1915, 6.

<sup>24</sup> Calderdale District Archives, MIC:8, *Halifax Parish Churchwardens' Accounts 1620-1725*, 188.



William Bentley, son of Francis, succeeded to his father's business in 1708, and in this year the first history of Halifax was published for him. It was *Halifax and its Gibbet-Law Placed in a True Light*, written by Samuel Midgley who was parish clerk and also clerk to the Sterne family.<sup>25</sup> William Bentley also did some bookbinding as he bound books belonging to Halifax Parish Church Library in 1710.<sup>26</sup>

There were other booksellers in eighteenth century Halifax. Another history of the town, *The Antiquities of the Town of Halifax in Yorkshire* by the Reverend Thomas Wright, was printed in Leeds by James Lister for James Hodgson in 1738.<sup>27</sup> Martin Fielding was a bookseller in 1731. Abraham Milner was usher or schoolmaster at Heath Grammar School, Halifax before becoming a bookseller. He married Mary Fielding, daughter and heir of the late Martin Fielding in 1740. He soon afterwards took over James Hodgson's bookshop.<sup>28</sup> Nathaniel Binns (d.1796) was a bookseller by 1744.<sup>29</sup> He also had a bookshop in Elland for a brief period in the 1750s. Huddersfield which was to grow in size and significance later in the century, had fewer booksellers. William Dyson of Halifax had a shop in the early 1720s and during the 1750s and 1760s Nathaniel Binns had one every Tuesday.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Samuel Midgley, *Halifax, and its Gibbet-Law Placed in a True Light*, Halifax: F. How for Bentley, 1708.

T.W. Hanson, Halifax Parish Church Library, 45.

<sup>26</sup> Calderdale District Archives, MIC:8, *Halifax Parish Churchwardens' Accounts 1620-1725*, 310.

<sup>27</sup> Thomas Wright, *The Antiquities of Halifax*, Leeds: James Lister, 1738.

<sup>28</sup> Thomas Cox, *A Popular History of the Grammar School of Queen Elizabeth, at Heath, near Halifax, at Heath, near Halifax*, 81.

Elizabeth A. Swaim, The Auction as a Means of Book Distribution in Eighteenth-century Yorkshire, *Publishing History*, 1, 1977, 63.

<sup>29</sup> H. Ling Roth, Odd Notes on Halifax Booksellers and Printers, 6.

<sup>30</sup> Elizabeth A. Swaim, The Auction as a Means of Book Distribution in Eighteenth-century Yorkshire, 49.

Bookselling was not always carried on through bookshops. Book auctions, often of private libraries, were sometimes held. Elizabeth Swaim's study of book auctions in Yorkshire 1691-1781 identified 36 auctions in Halifax, which was second only to Leeds with 40 followed by York 22, Wakefield 19, Bradford 14 and Sheffield 10. No auctions are recorded for Huddersfield. Most of the auctions took place after 1750. Only five of the auctions in Halifax mentioned in this study were held before 1750.<sup>31</sup> The Reverend Robert Meeke was Curate of St. James Church, Slaithwaite 1685-1724 and his scholarly interests are described in the section on Slaithwaite libraries.<sup>32</sup> He referred to one of these auctions in his diary for April 1694 he wrote:

11th. - Rode to Halifax, to an auction; stayed all night.

12th. - Went again to the sale of books by auction; bought as many yesterday and today as came to 24s.2d.<sup>33</sup>

Ralph Thoresby also attended it. He wrote 12 April 1694:

...rode to Halifax, where we met with several ministers...at the auctions where I squandered away some money in books.<sup>34</sup>

Swaim's study makes no claim to be comprehensive, so other book auctions can be identified, for example, Robert Meeke attended a book auction in Halifax in 1693. In his diary 4 January 1693 he wrote:

Rode to Halifax, to a sale of books, by auction; bought what comes to 10s; and then came home.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Elizabeth A. Swaim, *The Auction as a Means of Book Distribution in Eighteenth-century Yorkshire*, 76-91.

<sup>32</sup> See below 2.2.3.

<sup>33</sup> Robert Meeke *Extracts from the Diary of the Rev. Robert Meeke*, 74.

<sup>34</sup> Ralph Thoresby, *Diary of Ralph Thoresby, F.R.S.*, Vol. 1, 256.

<sup>35</sup> Robert Meeke, *Extracts from the Diary of the Rev. Robert Meeke*, 58.



Jonathan Priestley wrote to Ralph Thoresby 9 April 1696 about an auction the following week:

We have an auction here next week, of which Mr Bentley promised to send you a catalogue, otherwise I would have sent one myself; if there be any bookes you desire to buy, if you please to acquaint me I will buy them for you as cheap as I can...<sup>36</sup>

In addition John Turner (c.1706-73), solicitor of Huddersfield, noted several book auctions in Halifax and elsewhere in his day book. His interest in books is referred to in the section on reading and private collections in Chapter 3.<sup>37</sup> Not all the book auctions that he attended are mentioned in Swaim's study, for example:

22 February 1737  
... went to Halifax to auction pd for books.<sup>38</sup>

and

25 November 1747  
...went to Halifax to the auction and pd...for a parcel of books bought there (Sept 10th)  
N. Binns sent

0 - 18 - 9<sup>39</sup>

The number of book auction therefore would be considerably higher than the figures in Swaim's study suggest.

## 2.2 CHURCH OF ENGLAND LIBRARIES

### 2.2.1 Introduction

By the sixteenth century collections of books in churches began to be formed into parochial libraries. As the parish church was the centre of parish and religious administration these libraries could be regarded as the first public libraries in

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<sup>36</sup> Letters Addressed to Ralph Thoresby, ed. W.T. Lancaster, *Publications of the Thoresby Society*, 21, 1912, 47.

<sup>37</sup> See below 3.2.

<sup>38</sup> Yorkshire Archaeological Society, MS 757, John Turner, *Day Book 1732-7*, Vol. 1, Part 1.

<sup>39</sup> Yorkshire Archaeological Society, MS 757, John Turner, *Day Book 1747-50*, Vol. 1, Part 2.



England, in contrast to private libraries owned by individuals or those restricted to members of academic communities such as universities and schools.

The formation of libraries in connection with churches was not new in the sixteenth century. For centuries libraries had been attached to cathedrals and before their dissolution, to monasteries. The keeping of books in churches in the Middle Ages was common practice. Most churches probably possessed some books other than service books in the fifteenth century.<sup>40</sup> An order of the Second Royal Injunctions of Henry VIII of 1538 required the placing of a Bible in every parish church. King Edward VI, by an injunction of 1547 ordered every church to provide a Bible in English. Other works which were required or recommended to be placed in churches in the late sixteenth and early years of the seventeenth century were Bishop Jewel's works, homilies and Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*.<sup>41</sup>

In the East Riding, York Minister had an important cathedral library from as early as the eighth century with a library attached to the cathedral school. The library proper dated from the early fifteenth century.<sup>42</sup> A library was formed in Ripon in 1624 by the bequest of Dean Higgin. In 1836 the church became a cathedral and its library a cathedral library.<sup>43</sup>

Church of England libraries were numerous throughout England by 1800. A committee appointed by the Central Council for the Care of Churches to investigate

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<sup>40</sup> Central Council for the Care of Churches, *The Parochial Libraries of the Church of England*, London: Faith Press, 1959, 2-14.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, 14-15.

<sup>42</sup> C.B.L. Barr, *The Minister Library, A History of York Minister*, ed. G.E. Alymer and Reginald Cant, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977, 487-8, 494.

<sup>43</sup> J.T. Fowler, *Ripon Minister Library and its Founder*, *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*, 2, 1873, 371-4.

the number and condition of parochial libraries belonging to the Church of England published its findings in a report entitled *The Parochial Libraries in the Church of England* in 1959. It listed 131 libraries in England which were formed before 1800 and which were still in existence at the time of publication.<sup>44</sup> The figure must be far higher as many have not survived. The report lists 16 libraries in Yorkshire including two in the Halifax and Huddersfield areas: Halifax and Slaithwaite. Nine were also listed in neighbouring Lancashire, six of which were described by Richard Christie in "The Old Church and School Libraries of Lancashire" published by the Chetham Society in 1885.<sup>45</sup> There was renewed interest in church libraries in the early eighteenth century with the foundation of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge in 1699 and the 1709 Act for the Better Preservation of Parochial Libraries. 'Bray' libraries were formed. They were named after the Reverend Thomas Bray (1656-1730) who had made the original proposal for their foundation. Some were set up on his initiative whereas others were set up by the Trustees for Erecting Parochial Libraries and Promoting Other Charitable Designs. By the time of Bray's death in 1730 the Trustees had founded 56 libraries. After his death the work was transferred to the Associates of Dr. Bray who founded 12 lending libraries and more than 70 parochial libraries in the north of England and Wales between 1753 and 1768.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Central Council for the Care of Churches, *The Parochial Libraries of the Church of England*, 113-5.

<sup>45</sup> Richard Copley Christie, *The Old Church and School Libraries of Lancashire*, Chetham Society: *Remains Historical and Literary connected with the Palatine Counties of Lancaster and Chester*, New Series 7, 1885.

<sup>46</sup> Thomas Kelly, *Early Public Libraries*, 104-10.

### 2.2.2 Halifax Parish Church Library

Halifax had one of the earliest parochial libraries in the West Riding of Yorkshire dating from c.1624-8. A detailed history of the Halifax Parish Church Library has been written by T.W. Hanson.<sup>47</sup> There is evidence of books being held in Halifax church at an early date, for example, by the will of John de Burgh in 1402:

Item to celebrate for my soul xxi marcs. Item for windows to be made in the chancel there x marcs. Item for a book to be bought there x marcs.<sup>48</sup>

and by the will of Richard Waterhouse of Warley in 1484:

I give and bequeath a certain book called 'pars oculi' to the aforesaid church of Halifax.<sup>49</sup>

However, Neil Ker does not include any books from this library in his *Medieval Libraries of Great Britain. A List of Surviving Books* and it is not until the first quarter of the seventeenth century that there is further evidence of a library in the church.<sup>50</sup> The Reverend Robert Clay, Vicar of Halifax 1624-8, was the nephew of Henry Savile who was a friend of Sir Thomas Bodley and benefactor of the Bodleian Library. Robert Clay was a student at Oxford University when the Bodleian Library was founded in 1602. Undoubtedly the Halifax Parish Church library was formed or reorganised during his incumbency and it is possible that the presence of an earlier collection of books was an incentive for this work. Evidence

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<sup>47</sup> T.W. Hanson, Halifax Parish Church Library.

T.W. Hanson, Halifax Parish Church under the Commonwealth. John Brearcliffe, *The Antiquary: Part III, Transactions of the Halifax Antiquarian Society*, 1909, 285-314.

<sup>48</sup> *Halifax Wills. Part 1. 1389-1514*, ed. J.W. Clay, 3.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid*, 23.

<sup>50</sup> Neil R. Ker ed., *Medieval Libraries of Great Britain. A List of Surviving Books*, 2nd ed., London: Royal Historical Society, 1964.

Andrew G. Watson ed., *Medieval Libraries of Great Britain. Edited by N.R. Ker. A List of Surviving Books. Supplement to the Second Edition*, London: Royal Historical Society, 1987.



of Clay's contribution to the library's development appears in a letter from Thomas Leigh to Christopher Wase.<sup>51</sup> Leigh reported in September 1673:

There is a thing called a library founded by Dr. Robt. Clay Vic: de Halyfax in a pt. of Halyfax church, ye rooms is very small and incomodious and hath in it but one shelve of bookes.<sup>52</sup>

Sir Henry Savile presented Clay to the living, but none of Savile's books found their way into the library. However, Clay gave *The Works of St. Ambrose* in four volumes to the library. With the relative wealth of the parish coupled with the initiative of Clay, the library increased by donations. Henry Briggs, mathematician and Savilian Professor at Oxford University, for example, gave J.A. De Thou's *History of his Times* in three volumes, 1606. His famous work on logarithms, *Arithmetica Logarithma*, was bound with one of them.<sup>53</sup>

After the death of Robert Clay in 1628, the library benefited from the services of a local antiquary, John Brearcliffe (1618-82). An apothecary by trade, he was a churchwarden in Halifax at the time of the Commonwealth. Ralph Thoresby referred to him as "that industrious and (which is infinitely better) religious antiquary".<sup>54</sup> On a visit to Halifax 12 August 1682, Thoresby wrote:

...rid to Halifax, had the pleasing society of Mr Brearcliffe, the ingenious antiquary, who kindly lent me his manuscript collection...<sup>55</sup>

Brearcliffe prepared the first catalogue of the library when the Pious Uses Commission, which was set up in 1651 and reported in 1652, required an inventory

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<sup>51</sup> See below 2.4.

<sup>52</sup> D.K. Shearing, *School Libraries and Librarianship in the Early Seventeenth Century, Aspects of Education: 1600-1750*, 31, 1984, 80.

<sup>53</sup> T.W. Hanson, *Halifax Parish Church Library*, 38-40.

<sup>54</sup> Ralph Thoresby, *Diary of Ralph Thoresby F.R.S.*, Vol. 1, 131.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid*, Vol. 1, 131.

of the furniture and ornaments of the church. The Brearcliffe manuscript of c.1659 lists 43 volumes:

- 1 - St. Augustine's exposition upon the New Testament, in folio
- 2 - St. Augustines's upon misticall psalmes in folio
- 3 - St. Augustine's Arguments against the heresies of the Jewes, etc, in folio
- 4 - St. Augustine's 4th worke in folio
- 5 - St. Augustine's Index of all his workes in folio
- 6 - St. Augustine's in eleven severall bookes of his workes in octavo
- 7 - Erasmus upon St. Augustine's epistles in folio
- 8 - Tullyes Cicero workes in 2 volumes or bookes in a little folio: Ralph Ashton Kirkby gave
- 9 - St. Ambrose upon the old and New Testament in folio
- 10 - St. Ambrose his exposition of the 119 Psalme in folio
- 11 - St. Ambrose concerneinge the mannars of fights against heretiques in folio
- 12 - Thuanus [J.A.De Thou] historye of his times called his Tomus primus in folio - Hen: Briggs gift
- 13 - Thuanus [J.A. De Thou] his Tomus Tertius [sic] in folio - Henry Briggs gift
- 14 - Thuanus [J.A. De Thou] his Tomus Tertius in folio - Henry Briggs gift
- 15 - St. Ambrose his 3rd part of his workes in a little folio
- 16 - Eusebius first booke of Ecclesiasticall history in folio
- 17 - Origen 3d and 4th Booke in a little folio - Thomas Owting Vicar of Bracewell
- 18 - Boniface, 6 of decretalls in a little folio - Roger Radcliffe Vicar of Horburye
- 19 - Justinian upon the civill law in folio

- 20 - Justinian againe upon the civill law in folio
- 21 - Justinian another of his workes in folio
- 22 - Justinian another of his workes in folio which are all marked in the frontispeace.

B. Rembolt

- 23 - Lyra 2 Expositions upon the old and new Testament, in old print and in folio  
which are in 2 great volumes
- 24 - Malorat upon the Psalmes, in a large folio
- 25 - Malorat upon the New Testament - Richard Ramsden of Siddall his gift
- 26 - A Greek Lexicon by Bude in folio
- 27 - Boethius de consolacione philosophiae in folio
- 28 - Horace, Comentarye upon Cruquius, in a large quarto - Henry Tong gift
- 29 - Aretius Felinius [Martin Bucer] upon the psalms in a little folio - Robert Burron  
gift
- 30 - Bede upon Paul's epistles in folio
- 31 - Musculus upon Mathew in folio given by Richard Batt of Spen
- 32 - Greenham's Workes in English in a little folio Edward Ashworth gift
- 33 - Thomas Aquinas upon the Evangelists in folio
- 34 - Cornelius Delphius Exposition upon part of St. Paul's Epistle, in quarto
- 35 - [David] Chytraeus upon the Epistles in octavo. Henry Tonge gift
- 36 - Perkins exposition of Christ's Sermon in the mount, etc.: in folio Mr. Ro:  
Bensons gift
- 37 - Perkins works of choic places in Scripture etc: in folio – Mr. Ro: Bensons gift



37 - Perkins works of choic places in Scripture etc: in folio – Mr. Ro: Bensons gift

38 - Dr White workes in English in little folio <sup>56</sup>

The books in the Halifax Church library were primarily religious works, but there were others on law and classics. The Pious Uses Commission found evidence that books had been borrowed, so although most people were unable to read, there was sufficient interest amongst the literate for the loan of books:

Diverse books are taken out of ye vestrye in the church of Hallifax by diverse men and is in ye custody of Thomas Marshall, Sextone.<sup>57</sup>

No loan registers survive, but one Randle Tipping, lately deceased, had borrowed Dr. Hall's works and the History of the Council of Trent 10 July 1645.

The Brearcliffe manuscript lists further works donated 1655-6:

1. May 18 1655 Beza Exposition on the new Testament in folio the gift of Dr. Hen: Wilkinson, Oxford
2. May 10 Symson's Cronicon Catholicon, in folio, the gift of Mr. Israel Tong MA Oxford, cost 18s
3. Titus Livius Roman History in folio in English, 9th June, 1655 Mr. Jeremiah Marsden's gift
4. Bernards works in folio, Latin 5th July 1655 being Mr. Will alt gift of Bury
5. Diodati Annotations folio of ye whol bibl June 21 1656 being Mr. Gerrard 12s, cost

Dr. Hall's works brought againe to the Library, which hath been 14 years wanting.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Calderdale District Archives, MISC:182, *Antiquarian Notes of John Brearcliffe, Halifax 1651-82.*

<sup>57</sup> Calderdale District Archives, HAS:B22/27, *Manuscript of John Brearcliffe of Halifax, Apothecary and Antiquarian 1651-82.*

<sup>58</sup> Calderdale District Archives, MISC: 182. *Antiquarian Notes of John Brearcliffe, Halifax 1651-82.*

Later Thomas Bray was to write in 1697 *An Essay Towards Promoting all Necessary and Useful Knowledge, both Divine and Human, in all Parts of His Majesty's Dominions, both at Home and Abroad* where he proposed having a lending library in each deanery for the clergy and gentry.<sup>59</sup> Lending libraries would be of particular value to younger gentry:

Standing Libraries will signifie little in the Country, where Persons must ride some miles to look into a Book; such Journeys being too expensive of Time and Money: But Lending Libraries, which come home to 'em without Charge, may tolerably well supply the Vacancies in their own Studies, till such time as these Lending Libraries may be improved into Parochial Libraries.<sup>60</sup>

These remarks were not directed specifically at Halifax where a library had already been established, yet they seem particularly apt to such an extensive parish. Rather than study scholarly religious and classical works within the church itself, reading at home would have allowed time for more extensive study.

According to the churchwardens' account of Halifax Parish Church for 1652, money was being spent on the upkeep of the library. The accounts have entries, which show that the book chains were repaired and some binding was carried out, for example:

	s	d
Item to mend the lock and oyle book chaines and scraping of the rust	0	8
To take downe to ayr and sett the books up again to Tho: Marshall and H. Hinle	0	6

<sup>59</sup> Central Council for the Care of Churches, *The Parochial Libraries of the Church of England*, 20. Thomas Bray, *An Essay Towards Promoting all Necessary and Useful Knowledge, both Divine and Human, in all Parts of His Majesty's Dominions, both at Home and Abroad*, London: E. Holt for Robert Clavel, 1697.

<sup>60</sup> George Smith, Dr. Thomas Bray, *Library Association Record*, 12(3), March 1910, 249.

I: to piec the chaines and nayl them on the books with plates	0	10
for 2 new kayes for the librarye lock	1	0
for 3 large folios for St. Austin's binding new	3	0
pointing library inside of the glass	0	6
coloured quarrell library window	1	0 <sup>61</sup>

The Reverend Joseph Wilkinson was Vicar 1691-1711 and he too was to make a contribution to the library. The churchwardens' accounts show in August 1699:

	£	s	d
Paid...for work done in the library	0	1	6
Paid for dressing the vestry and library 12d for nailes 2d	0	1	2
Pd for Tho Dickinson for 3 days and a half most in the library	0	3	0 <sup>62</sup>

Ralph Thoresby approved of the improvements and wrote in his diary 19 April 1702:

Rode to Halifax...went to the Vicarage to visit Mr Wilkinson; took some extracts from the registers, etc. Was to see the church and new library, which he has exceedingly beautified.<sup>63</sup>

In 1710 structural alterations were made to the library. William Bentley bound books for £4 11s and as his bindings were not for chained books, this may have been the date when the books ceased to be chained.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Calderdale District Archives, MIC:8, *Halifax Parish Churchwardens' Accounts 1620-1725*, 110. T.W. Hanson, *Halifax Parish Church Library*, 43.  
<sup>62</sup> Calderdale District Archives, MIC:8, *Halifax Parish Churchwardens' Accounts 1620-1725*, 259.  
<sup>63</sup> Ralph Thoresby, *Diary of Ralph Thoresby, F.R.S.*, Vol. 1, 361.  
<sup>64</sup> T.W. Hanson, *Halifax Parish Church under the Commonwealth*. John Brearcliffe, the Antiquary: Part III, 289-90.



In 1701 a collection of books was given to the library on the death of Simon Sterne, uncle of Laurence Sterne and son of Sir Richard Sterne, Archbishop of York 1664-83. Some of the books originally belonged to his father. Simon Sterne's will in 1696 states:

I give all my books of Divinity unto the eldest of my sons for ever that shall go or enter into orders. I give all the rest of my books unto Richard, my eldest son, for ever.<sup>65</sup>

Nevertheless, despite the terms of his will, some books were given to the church.

### **2.2.3 Slaithwaite Church Library**

Another library connected with a church in the West Riding of Yorkshire was at Slaithwaite from 1724, about a century after the foundation of the Halifax Parish Church Library, underlining the later development of Huddersfield. None of the parish churches in the four parishes covering the Huddersfield area appear to have had a library at this time. The chapelry of St. James Church at Slaithwaite, although in Huddersfield parish, served the townships of Lingards and Linthwaite in Almondbury parish as well as Golcar and Slaithwaite. It had a library which was the bequest of the Reverend Robert Meeke. His diary made reference to his purchase of books at book auctions as noted above in the section on bookselling and printing and he also owned books, which had belonged to his father, the Reverend William Meeke, who had been a minister at Salford.<sup>66</sup> The diary also detailed his teaching of the catechism referred to in the educational background section in Chapter 1.<sup>67</sup> He also refers to his books and studies, for example:

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<sup>65</sup> J.W. Clay, The Sterne Family, *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*, 21, 1911, 98.

<sup>66</sup> See above 2.1.

<sup>67</sup> See above 1.3.2.

1691 September 7th. - At home all day, was busy dressing my closet and ordering my books, placing some in a press, new bought. Lord help me to make use of them as I ought, for I have a choice of books, a great privilege which many want. I know not how long I may enjoy them.<sup>68</sup>

By the terms of his will, having no son, he left some books to his successors:

Item, my books I leave to be sold, except those of which I have left a catalogue in the hands of my Executor, which I give to the Minister of Sleightwaite for the time being, and some of them to the particular friends named in the catalogue aforesaid; the price of the books sold I give to the poor of the Chappelry of Sleightwaite and Linthwaite and Lingarths, and that part of Golcar in this side the brook under Sharehill, to be divided and distributed by some impartial and prudent men.<sup>69</sup>

Proceeds from the sale of land were to be used for the purchase of Bibles, New Testaments and of Common Prayer Books for the poor. The library itself was not intended for general use as the books were left to the minister. This was a common practice as the 1959 report on *The Parochial Libraries of the Church of England* notes:

Some of the country clergy left books to their successors for ever.<sup>70</sup>

Most Bray libraries too were intended for clergy only.<sup>71</sup> Meeke left a substantial collection of 133 works, mainly theological, but also a few classical works. He did not leave all his books to his successors as is illustrated in his will. Some were sold and others were left to friends, specifically Pool's *English Annotations*, which is left

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<sup>68</sup> Robert Meeke, *Extracts from the Diary of the Rev. Robert Meeke*, 43-4.

<sup>69</sup> West Yorkshire Archives, Wakefield, D120, *St. James Church, Slaithwaite*.

<sup>70</sup> Central Council for the Care of Churches, *The Parochial Libraries of the Church of England*, 18.

<sup>71</sup> Thomas Kelly, *Early Public Libraries*, 104.

to the family at Hilltop where he lodged at the home of his cousin Aeneas Bottomley.<sup>72</sup>

It might be assumed that larger parishes had libraries first, but this is not borne out by the evidence of Slaithwaite, a small chapelry had a library while Almondbury and Huddersfield had no such provision. The initiative and generosity of individuals is demonstrated by Robert Meeke of Slaithwaite setting up a library by bequest and Halifax Parish Church library had several benefactors who followed the example of the Reverend Robert Clay. However, the library at Slaithwaite was in no sense a public library, as it was only for the use of the minister, whereas in Halifax the Pious Uses Commission reporting in 1652 found evidence of loans, so it was obviously being used by parishioners. The later history of the Halifax and Slaithwaite libraries is continued in Chapter 6.<sup>73</sup>

## **2.3 NONCONFORMIST LIBRARIES**

### **2.3.1 Oliver Heywood**

Universities were only open to Anglicans and therefore nonconformists established their own academies. There was an overwhelming contrast in library provision between the Anglican universities and the dissenting academies. Persecution of nonconformists, especially before the Toleration Act of 1689, hindered library development so students and tutors were often dependent on the private libraries of leading Puritans and a few dissenting tutors acquired libraries of several hundred volumes. It was not until 1730 that an academy had an institutional library: Philip

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<sup>72</sup> York University Library, *Guide to Special Collections*, 5th ed., 1991.

<sup>73</sup> See below 6.1.1 and 6.1.6.



Doddridge's Northampton Academy. The first nonconformist endowed library Dr. Williams' Library was opened in London in 1729.<sup>74</sup>

Oliver Heywood (1630-1702) was introduced in the religious background section in Chapter 1.<sup>75</sup> Not only was he an author and book collector, but he actively promoted his ideas and beliefs by distributing his publications to his followers and by lending books from his library. He is chiefly remembered for his diaries. Contemporaries sought the truth in his religious treatises, which had a wide distribution. These included *Heart Treasure...being the Substance of Some Sermons...on Mat.12.35* 1667-72, *Life in God's Favour...being the Substance of Sunday Sermons upon Psalm xxx.5* in 1679 and *Israel's Lamentations after the Lord* in 1683.<sup>76</sup>

Books were sent from London by the religious publisher Thomas Parkhurst, and Heywood distributed them. For example, on publication of *Heart's Treasure* in 1667, he received 60 for Yorkshire and 60 for Lancashire and he listed 43 Yorkshire and 42 Lancashire recipients. Subsequently before February 1671 a further 132 were received from London. There was a similar arrangement in place for *Closet Prayer*.

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<sup>74</sup> David L. Ferch, "Good Books are a Very Great Mercy to the World": Persecution, Private Libraries, and the Printed Word in the Early Development of the Dissenting Academies, 1663-1730, *Journal of Library History*, 21(2), 1986, 351-2, 354.

<sup>75</sup> See above 1.2.2.

<sup>76</sup> Oliver Heywood, *Heart Treasure...being the Substance of Some Sermons...on Mat.12.35*, London: 1667-72.

Oliver Heywood, *Life in God's Favour...being the Substance of Sunday Sermons upon Psalm xxx.5*, London, 1679.

Oliver Heywood, *Israel's Lamentations after the Lord*, Thomas Parkhurst, 1683.

12 were received for Lancashire and 96 for Yorkshire in 1669 and another 150 were sent before a second edition appeared in 1671.<sup>77</sup>

Oliver Heywood had prominent Puritan family connections. He wrote the biography of his father-in-law, the Reverend John Angier (1604-77) of Denton, Lancashire: *A Narrative of the Holy Life, and Happy Death of Mr John Angier*, published in 1683. He also wrote the biography of his brother the Reverend Nathaniel Heywood (1633-77). He did not neglect the needs of young people for he wrote *Advice to an Only Child...Containing the Summary and Substance of Practical Divinity* in 1700.<sup>78</sup>

Oliver Heywood made a catalogue of his books. In 1664 257 were listed, most of which were priced, followed by a few unpriced works. Although the date of the catalogue is 1664, it could well have been later as it appears from the *British Library Catalogue of Printed Books* that some were not published until after this date.<sup>79</sup> The books were almost exclusively religious works, notably eleven by the Presbyterian writer, Richard Baxter (1615-91). However, a few were classical works, for example, Peter Heylyn's *Microcosmus, or a Little Description of the Great World*. Contemporary interest in witchcraft is demonstrated by the inclusion of two books on witchcraft: *A Discourse of the Damned Art of Witchcraft* by William Perkins and John Gaule's *Select Cases of Conscience, Touching Witches and*

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<sup>77</sup> Oliver Heywood, *The Rev. Oliver Heywood, B.A., 1630-1702*, Vol. 3, 66-73.

Oliver Heywood, *Closet Prayer, a Christian Duty: or a Treatise upon Mat. Vi.6*, 2nd ed., London: 1671.

<sup>78</sup> Oliver Heywood, *A Narrative of the Holy Life, and Happy Death of Mr John Angier*, London: Thomas Parkhurst, 1683.

Oliver Heywood, *Advice to an Only Child... Containing the Summary and Substance of Experimental and Practical Divinity*, London: For Thomas Parkhurst, 1700.

<sup>79</sup> Oliver Heywood, *The Rev. Oliver Heywood, B.A. 1630-1702*, Vol. 2, 123-8.



*Witchcraft*.<sup>80</sup> These books show the interest which witchcraft held for ministers of religion. Informal lending of books was quite common, but the Reverend Oliver Heywood had such a substantial library and as a religious leader with a wide following he was able to note at least 21 borrowers including four women.<sup>81</sup> A few books were lost: Anthony Burgesse, *Spiritual Refining Part I*, was “lost with lending” and a few others were stolen.<sup>82</sup> Heywood was often persecuted for his preaching. In 1670 some of his goods were seized. He described it in his diary:

...they swept all away, three good chests, three tables, chaires, stooles, my bed, bedding, curtaines - all my goods except a cup board, and a few chaires are gone...they rated them together [sic] with 10 books to ten pounds and a noble - cheap penyworths - all this on wednesday july 13 1670: blessed be god.<sup>83</sup>

At the foot of the catalogue is written: “these taken from me for preaching the Gospel.” The particular books listed were valued at £37 4s 5d, whereas according to the diary only 10 books were taken, which were valued at just over £10 together with the furniture. One possibility is that the books at the end of the catalogue, which were part of a different sequence, were seized.<sup>84</sup> The list was subject to change. He bought a further 29 books 1677-8.<sup>85</sup> He bequeathed most of his books to his sons the Reverend John Heywood (1656-1704) and the Reverend Eliezer Heywood (1657-1713).<sup>86</sup> They also benefited from their maternal grandfather, the

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<sup>80</sup> Peter Heyln, *Microcosmus, or a Little Description of the Great World*, Oxford: Lichfield and Short, 1621.

William Perkins, *A Discourse of the Damned Art of Witchcraft*, Cambridge: C. Legge, 1608.

John Gaule, *Select Cases of Conscience, Touching Witches and Witchcraft*, London, 1646.

<sup>81</sup> Oliver Heywood, *The Rev. Oliver Heywood, B.A., 1630-1702*, Vol. 3, 65.

<sup>82</sup> Oliver Heywood, *The Rev. Oliver Heywood, B.A., 1630-1702*, Vol. 2, 124-8.

Anthony Burgesse, *Spiritual Refining Part I*, London: A. Miller for Thomas Underhill, 1652.

<sup>83</sup> Oliver Heywood, *The Rev. Oliver Heywood, B.A., 1630-1702*, Vol. 1, 270-1.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid, Vol. 2, 128.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid, Vol. 2, 189-90.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid, Vol. 1, 6-7, 90.



Reverend John Angier, who by his will in 1677 bequeathed his manuscripts, pamphlets and papers and books to be divided equally between John and Eliezer and two other grandsons.<sup>87</sup>

### 2.3.2 Society of Friends' Libraries

The Society of Friends which was first referred to in the religious background section in Chapter 1, was particularly well-organised in printing and distributing its literature.<sup>88</sup> All publications had to be approved by a central committee and a network of distribution was set up through shopkeepers and the internal system of quarterly, monthly and particular meetings. Such a strong central organisation enabled meetings to sell books to members and they also had book collections.<sup>89</sup> The foundations of a reference library of the Society of Friends in London were laid as early as 1673 when a Meeting directed that “2 of a sort of all bookes written by freinds [sic]” and “one of a sort” of all written by their adversaries should be kept together for the use of Friends. A catalogue of Friends' books was compiled by John Whiting in 1708.<sup>90</sup>

Brighouse Monthly Meeting was part of the Quarterly Meeting at York. The earliest extant minute books of the Brighouse Monthly Meeting are from 1688 and they include references to books purchased from Thomas Hammond at York. Robert Barclay's *An Apology for the True Christian Divinity* published in England in 1678

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<sup>87</sup> Oliver Heywood, *Oliver Heywood's Life of John Angier of Denton, Chetham Society. Remains Historical and Literary connected with the Palatine Counties of Lancaster and Chester*, New Series 97, 1937, 136.

<sup>88</sup> See above 1.2.2.

<sup>89</sup> Arnold Lloyd, *Quaker Social History 1669-1738*, London: Longmans and Green 1950, 147.

<sup>90</sup> Anna L. Littleboy, *Devonshire House Library with Notes on Early Printers and Printing in the Society of Friends*, *Journal of the Friends' Historical Society*, 18(3), 1921, 66, 69.

has been accepted as a comprehensive statement of Quaker principles. A large issue of 6,606 was printed of the fourth edition in 1701.<sup>91</sup> In that year 119 copies were to be sent to Brighouse Monthly Meeting, from which 60 were to be sent to Leeds, 20 to Brighouse, 15 to Bradford, 12 to Halifax and 12 to Mankinholes (near Todmorden).<sup>92</sup>

As early as 1691 there is evidence of books being lent to members. In 1707 11 books were listed as belonging to the Meeting, but as some authors had written several works, the number of volumes would be higher.<sup>93</sup> The Brighouse Monthly Meeting minute book for 1707 list the following books as belonging to the Monthly Meeting:

1. Edward Burrough's [1634-63] works
2. Joseph Wyeth [1663-1731] *Angius Flagellatus; or a Switch for the Snake*: London, 1699
3. George Bishop, *New England Judged*, For Robert Wilson: London, 1661
4. Samuel Fisher's [1617-81] works
5. George Fox [1624-91] *Epistles*
6. Charles Marshall [1637-90] collections
7. John Brook's collections
8. George Fox: *Journal*, London: Thomas Northcott (T. Sowle), [1694-8]
9. Thomas Taylor's [1618-96] works

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<sup>91</sup> Arnold Lloyd, *Quaker Social History 1669-1738*, 154.

Robert Barclay, *An Apology for the True Christian Divinity*, 1678.

<sup>92</sup> Brotherton Library, Leeds University, Q1, Society of Friends, Brighouse Monthly Meeting, *Minute Book 1688-1704*, 116.

<sup>93</sup> Brotherton Library, Leeds University, Q1, Society of Friends, Brighouse Monthly Meeting, *Minute Book 1688-1704*, 34.



10. Roger Haydock's [1644-96] works

11. George Fox, *Gospel-truth Demonstrated in a Collection of Doctrinal Books*, 1706.<sup>94</sup>

These books were not only religious works, but also Quaker works. Not for them the indiscriminate accumulation of donations! Collections of Quaker writers embodied the beliefs of the Society of Friends, which distinguished it from other denominations so books were central to Society of Friends' meetings.

The books were circulated to each preparative meeting. In April 1712 the minutes read:

Books ordered to Bradford for 6 months, then to Leeds to Guildersome [sic] to Brighouse to Halifax to Mankinholes and any meeting loose [sic] any to make them good".<sup>95</sup>

In 1712 Brighouse Preparative Meeting had its own library where as many as 139 works are listed. Notes of loans were made.<sup>96</sup> Thus a relatively small religious group had a sizeable collection of books; some of which were being loaned and which were in all but name a library. The later history of the Society of Friends' libraries is considered in Chapter 3 and Chapter 6.<sup>97</sup>

## 2.4 SCHOOL LIBRARIES

Books were used in both grammar schools and charity schools where there was a strong emphasis on Christian education as described in the education section in

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<sup>94</sup> Brotherton Library, Leeds University, Q2, Society of Friends, Brighouse Monthly Meeting, *Minute Book*, 1704-12, 51.

<sup>95</sup> Brotherton Library, Leeds University, Q3, Society of Friends, Brighouse Monthly Meeting, *Minute Book* 1712-28, 6.

<sup>96</sup> Brotherton Library, Leeds University, P41, Society of Friends, Brighouse Preparative Meeting, *Minute Book* 1701-37, 10-16.

<sup>97</sup> See below 3.8.4 and 6.3.



Chapter 1.<sup>98</sup> This is illustrated in the will of Joseph Brooksbank in 1712 who bequeathed money for a schoolmaster:

...for teaching the said forty poor children to read the English tongue, till such time as they can easily read the Bible, and repeat without book the Catechism... And upon farther trust yearly to expend the sum of thirty shillings in buying of ten Bibles and twenty Catechisms, (commonly called Assemblies Catechisms) to be yearly distributed and divided amongst the said forty poor children, in such a manner as the major part of the Trustees, for the time being should think fit.<sup>99</sup>

The books used in some schools extended beyond the Bible and catechism. Classical authors were read in grammar schools. One notable contemporary, Christopher Wase (c.1625-90) wrote a book on schools in 1678 entitled *Considerations Concerning Free Schools, as Settled in England*. On libraries he stated:

There remains another advantage of publick Schools: the great benefit to Learners after the Master, is a *good library*.<sup>100</sup>

He recommended types of book for inclusion in grammar school libraries and provision for the upkeep of the libraries. There is evidence, however, of only a few school libraries before the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, some early Lancashire grammar schools feature in Richard Christie's 1885 publication on old church and school libraries in Lancashire. This volume was noted in the introduction to the

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<sup>98</sup> See above 1.3.1.

<sup>99</sup> John Watson, *The History and Antiquities of the Parish of Halifax, in Yorkshire*, 563.

<sup>100</sup> Christopher Wase, *Considerations Concerning Free Schools, as Settled in England*, Oxford: 1678, 97.

Church of England libraries section.<sup>101</sup> Examples are Wigan Grammar School which had a library as early as 1647, Leigh Grammar School had one from around 1726 and Burnley Grammar School from 1728.<sup>102</sup>

In Halifax as early as about 1603, the Reverend John Favour donated books to Heath Grammar School, Halifax:

... a fair Couper's Dictionary, and a fair Greek lexicon, and procured a fair English Bible in the largest volume, for reading some chapters at [the] ordinary prayers morning and evening.<sup>103</sup>

Rishworth School in Halifax parish had a library from its foundation in 1725. It was set up by the will of John Wheelwright of North Shields dated 14 October 1724. By the terms of the will:

Item, I give all my household goods whatsoever, with all my books, that belong to me, either at North Shields, or any where in Yorkshire, towards the furnishing the aforesaid Goat-house, the said books to be catalogued, and carefully placed in some fit room, towards the foundation of a library, for the use of the twenty boys and girls aforesaid, and the said two Schoolmasters.<sup>104</sup>

The later history of day school libraries can be found in Chapters 3 and 5.<sup>105</sup>

## 2.5 CONCLUSION

There is ample evidence for book purchasing, reading, book collections and libraries in the Halifax and Huddersfield areas reflecting the national picture before the mid-eighteenth century. The Bible, catechisms, church service books and school textbooks had widespread use. Many people owned Bibles and copies of the

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<sup>101</sup> See above 2.2.1.

<sup>102</sup> Richard Copley Christie, *The Old Church and School Libraries of Lancashire*, 121, 182, 192.

<sup>103</sup> Thomas Cox, *A Popular History of the Grammar School of Queen Elizabeth, at Heath, near Halifax*, 19.

<sup>104</sup> John Watson, *The History and Antiquities of the Parish of Halifax, in Yorkshire*, 680

<sup>105</sup> See below 3.3 and 5.3.



catechism. However, only a few educated people had more extensive collections of books, but there was informal lending between those with a similar background and education. Antiquarians and scholars exchanged correspondence and visits as well as collecting books. With the association of Halifax parish with the Savile family and Henry Briggs, the very size of the parish and its early economic development and wealth, it seems no coincidence that one of the earliest parish libraries in Yorkshire was formed in Halifax.

There were few local booksellers, but Francis Bentley was selling books by 1679 and printed John Smith's *Doctrine of the Church of England* in 1694. Yet York, one of the earliest centres of printing in England, had a printer as early as 1497, almost two centuries before Halifax. Occasional auctions were events in themselves. Elizabeth Swaim, as we have seen, identified 36 auctions in Halifax 1691-1781, 31 of which took place 1750-81, so they had become almost an annual event after the mid-eighteenth century. The relatively high number of auctions held in Halifax compared with other Yorkshire towns, demonstrates its importance as an early commercial centre. In contrast Huddersfield did not have a bookseller until the 1720s and Swaim did not identify any book auctions in Huddersfield illustrating its later economic development. The Slaithwaite Church Library was formed in 1724, about a century after the foundation of the Halifax Parish Church Library, but it was a ministers' library only rather than a library for all parishioners.

The Society of Friends and Oliver Heywood, in an age of religious persecution, had developed their own methods of distributing literature to followers. Heywood spent much of his adult life in Northowram, Halifax parish, but was



known through his preaching and publications in other parts of the West Riding of Yorkshire, Lancashire and further afield. The Brighouse Monthly Meeting of the Society of Friends in Halifax parish seems to have been in a position of some influence as it was the centre of an area far more extensive than that covered by the Halifax and Huddersfield parishes, which included Bradford, Leeds, Keighley and Skipton. It had its own library. The Society of Friends had its own highly organised network of Yearly, Quarterly and Monthly meetings, which suggests that similar libraries were being held by other meetings.

Halifax parish in particular may seem to have been well supplied with libraries, but they would not be accessible to most people either through lack of literacy, location or religious affiliation. Unlike most parishes at this time, Halifax Parish Church had a library and there is even evidence of loans, but in practice few people would benefit as few were able to read or had sufficient education to appreciate the contents of the library. Quakers and Presbyterians were religious minorities. Moreover, Heywood's library was his own library, not a library belonging to a church. He bequeathed most of his books to his sons, not to his congregation. So only a few people would have access to or were able to make use of libraries.

The provision of education was being addressed by the formation of grammar schools and charity schools. Books were used in schools and some grammar schools had libraries, although in general throughout England, there are only scattered references to school libraries before the nineteenth century. Libraries

holding thousands of volumes with many readers would not come into being until most people had been educated and were able to read.

## CHAPTER 3

### THE BOOK TRADE AND LIBRARIES FROM THE MID-EIGHTEENTH CENTURY TO 1830

#### 3.1 BOOKSELLING AND PRINTING

##### 3.1.1 Bookselling in Halifax

Bookselling in Halifax dated from the late seventeenth century and several named booksellers were recorded as being in business in the eighteenth century as described above.<sup>1</sup> Directories are a source of information on booksellers. *The Commercial Directory for 1816* listed as many as 10 booksellers and stationers in Halifax including R. Lochhead law stationer, of Church Lane, and Nathan Whiteley, dealer in music and musical instruments at Cheapside.<sup>2</sup> The number had risen to 12 in 1818 including one in Hebden Bridge in Halifax parish. The inclusion in the list of P.K. Holden, stamp office, patent medicine and music seller illustrates the breadth of interests of printers and booksellers.<sup>3</sup> Baines' *History, Directory and Gazetteer* of 1822 lists eight booksellers, stationers and binders in Halifax and four bookbinders.<sup>4</sup>

Additionally books might also be purchased through book auctions that were held in Halifax in the eighteenth century. In Chapter 2 reference was made to a study of Yorkshire book auctions between 1691 and 1781 carried out by Elizabeth

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<sup>1</sup> See above 2.1.

<sup>2</sup> *The Commercial Directory for 1816-17*, Manchester: Wardle and Pratt, and Pigot, 1816, 93.

<sup>3</sup> James Pigot, *Commercial Directory for 1818, 19, and 20*, Manchester: Pigot, 1818, 141.

<sup>4</sup> Edward Baines, *History, Directory and Gazetteer, of the County of York Vol. 1, West Riding*, 189.



Swaim in which 36 auctions in Halifax were identified.<sup>5</sup> Of these, no less than 31, approximately one a year, were held during the years 1750-81, illustrating the expansion of the book trade in Halifax. According to the study, Halifax had more book auctions than York, Wakefield, Bradford and Sheffield during this period and was second only to Leeds.<sup>6</sup> Thus Halifax booksellers obviously looked further afield beyond their own town limits. Book auctions held in Halifax were advertised in the *Leeds Mercury* and the *Leeds Intelligencer*, so interest extended to other parts of Yorkshire.

What made Halifax a place of bibliographical renown was the Edwards family. They had a national reputation as booksellers, publishers and binders, and were particularly well known for their bindings. They perfected the techniques of vellum decoration and fore-edge binding. Richard Edwards (1691-1797) was a schoolmaster and stationer, but it was his son William Edwards (1722-1808) who set up the business in Old Market, Halifax. On William's death in 1808 his son Thomas Edward (1762-1834) succeeded him until 1826. Such was their reputation that they were also able to set up business in London. William's sons James (1756-1816) and John (1758-91) established Edwards and Sons in Pall Mall, London, in 1784, which continued until 1800, while another son, Richard Edwards (1768-1827), founded a second shop. Thus the term Edwards of Halifax is something of a misnomer, as members of the Edwards family were also active in the London book market. About

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<sup>5</sup> See above 2.1.

<sup>6</sup> Elizabeth A. Swaim, *The Auction as a Means of Book Distribution in Eighteenth-century Yorkshire*, 76-91.

11 sales catalogues were issued under the name of Thomas Edwards of Halifax between 1812 and 1828.<sup>7</sup>

In 1815 a general catalogue was produced, which had as many as 7,282 entries. The catalogue was general, but more than half of the entries were religious and classical works. 1,796 entries appear in the English history, antiquities, voyages and travels section showing interest in more recent subjects, although most of these books were published in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. A further 236 volumes were listed under the heading: *Superb Books of Prints, Atlases [sic], Books printed on Vellum with Miniatures, and other Superlatively Fine Articles*, which indicates that books were being collected as bibliographic treasures indicating both artistic tastes and wealth. The catalogue also lists 738 books in foreign languages, mainly French, Italian and Dutch, which suggests the presence of sufficient linguistic ability for a market for foreign language books.<sup>8</sup>

A further catalogue appeared as Part II in 1816. It comprised 3,239 books, 763 of which were in the category of mathematics, arts, sciences and natural history, so this extended the range of subjects in Part I not only beyond religious and classical works to history and geography, but to scientific subjects.<sup>9</sup> A separate catalogue for law and medical books was published in 1815 listing 516 law books and 918 medical books, which implies that both professions were well-established at

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<sup>7</sup> G.E. Bentley, Jr., "The Edwardses of Halifax" as Booksellers by Catalogue 1749-1835, *Studies in Bibliography*, 45, 1992, 187-9, 206-8, 218-21.

<sup>8</sup> Thomas Edwards, *Part I, A Catalogue of a Very Valuable and Select Collection of Books [1815]*, Halifax: Thomas Edwards, 1815.

<sup>9</sup> Thomas Edwards, *Part II, Catalogue. Being the Appendix and Supplement [1816]*, Halifax: P.K. Holden, 1816.



this time.<sup>10</sup> Both the number of catalogues and the range of subjects covered by these three examples indicate the importance of Halifax as a centre for book buying, publishing and selling. The contents of the catalogues show far more than basic education; they suggest the existence of an educated middle class with an interest in many subjects including sciences, facility in more than one language and with sufficient means to purchase rare and expensive books. These catalogues were obviously not directed at the Halifax market, even though some of the custom of the bookshop would have been local. The national reputation of the Edwards' family attracted trade and visitors from outside Halifax. They were successful businessmen displaying the enterprise, which made Halifax one of the leading towns in the West Riding of Yorkshire.

### 3.1.2 Printing in Halifax

As noted in the section on bookselling and printing in Chapter 2, printing in Halifax began as early as 1694.<sup>11</sup> Pressic Darby, a Sheffield printer, was the first printer to print more than one work in Halifax including a poem *An Essay on Halifax* in 1761.<sup>12</sup>

From 1770 to about 1814 the major printer in Halifax was Ephraim Jacob, sometimes known as Jacobs. In addition to books, he was the printer of many Halifax handbills.<sup>13</sup> Publications with his imprint appear in *The British Library*

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<sup>10</sup> Thomas Edwards, *A Catalogue of Law and Jurisprudence, also Medical Books [1815]*, Halifax: P.K. Holden, 1815.

<sup>11</sup> See above 2.1.

<sup>12</sup> H. Ling Roth, Odd Notes on Halifax Booksellers and Printers, *Halifax Courier*, 9,430, 4 September 1915, 6.  
*An Essay on Halifax*, Halifax: P. Darby, 1761.

<sup>13</sup> J. Lister, Halifax Handbills, H. Ling Roth, *The Yorkshire Coiners 1767-1783 and Notes on Old and Prehistoric Halifax*, Halifax: F. King, 1906, 268.



*English Short Title Catalogue*, some of which consisted of only one sheet, for example, in 1794 a sheet on:

Richard Ellam

*Stolen betwixt the hours of 9 and 10 o'clock last night, from the house of Mr Richard Ellam, in the Back-Lane, Halifax, a silver tankard...whoever can give information of the offender or offenders...shall, on conviction, receive a reward of one guinea, by applying to the aforesaid Richard Ellam.*

Many of the notices and announcements printed by Jacob and other printers bear similarities to advertisements and notices in the *Leeds Mercury* and the *Leeds Intelligencer* and may have been printed and circulated in the absence of a local newspaper for most of the period.

*The British Library English Short Title Catalogue* and *The British Library Catalogue of Printed Books* show that many eighteenth and early nineteenth century works published or sold in Halifax were religious. Books on Biblical commentary were common, for example, Thomas Hawkins, *A Commentary on the First, Second and Third Epistles of St. John* in 1808.<sup>14</sup> Sermons were also popular publications and were often published to commemorate specific events, for example: Thomas Allin, *A Sermon Preached at the Re-opening of Salem Chapel, belonging to the Methodist New Connexion in Halifax*, 1815.<sup>15</sup> Music books, notably hymns and psalms, were published. Some were service books such as *Select Portions of the Psalms, Taken from the Old and New Versions, and that of Mr. Merrick: to which are Added, a Few Hymns from Approved Authors Compiled for the Use of the*

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<sup>14</sup> Thomas Hawkins, *A Commentary on the First, Second and Third Epistles of St. John*, Halifax: Holden and Dowson, 1808.

<sup>15</sup> Thomas Allin, *A Sermon Preached at the Re-opening of Salem Chapel, belonging to the Methodist New Connexion in Halifax*, Halifax: P.K. Holden, 1815.

*Congregation of the Holy Trinity Church*. A fourth edition was published in 1809.<sup>16</sup>

But not all songbooks were religious, for example, *The Yorkshire Musical Miscellany, Comprising an Elegant Selection of the Most Admired Songs in the English Language, Set to Music*, which appeared in 1800.<sup>17</sup>

There were few political works printed in Halifax, although references to the French Revolution and subsequent wars appeared in songs and notices. Other works were literary. One example of a popular literary work was the *Cottage Poems* of the Reverend Patrick Brontë, the father of the famous Brontë sisters, who at the time of their publication was Minister of Hartshead-cum-Clifton, near Brighouse. Published in 1811, it was:

chiefly designed for the lower classes of society...Poems are intermixed, which do not immediately refer to the Cottage, but which, in general, are not above the comprehension of the meanest capacities.<sup>18</sup>

Another type of work was that on natural history. Many people took an interest in their natural surroundings as they still lived in small communities and even those in towns were in walking distance of the countryside. James Bolton (d.1795), a self-taught naturalist who also illustrated his own work, wrote *The History of Fungusses [sic], Growing about Halifax*. It was published in three volumes with a supplement

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<sup>16</sup> *Select Portions of the Psalms, Taken from the Old and New Versions and that of Mr. Merrick: to which are Added, a Few Hymns from Approved Authors Compiled for the Use of the Congregation of the Holy Trinity Church*, 4th ed., Halifax: Holden and Dowson, 1809.

<sup>17</sup> *The Yorkshire Musical Miscellany, Comprising an Elegant Selection of the Most Admired Songs in the English Language, Set to Music*, Halifax: Jacobs, 1800.

<sup>18</sup> Patrick Brontë, *Cottage Poems*, Halifax: P.K. Holden, 1811, 1.



1788-91. The first in Halifax in 1788, and the second two volumes in 1788 and 1789 respectively, with a supplement published in 1791 by J. Brook in Huddersfield.<sup>19</sup>

By the mid-eighteenth century two histories of Halifax had already been published, as noted in the introduction, but a more substantial work *The History and Antiquities of the Parish of Halifax, in Yorkshire* in 1775 by John Watson was published. Jacob published a shorter history in 1789: *The History of the Town and Parish of Halifax* is based on Watson's book.<sup>20</sup>

Two West Riding of Yorkshire newspapers: the *Leeds Mercury* founded in 1718 and re-founded in 1767 and the *Leeds Intelligencer* founded in 1754 included Halifax news and advertisements. Halifax had its own weekly newspaper the *Halifax Union Journal* published by Pressic Darby, but it was only issued between February 1759 and September 1760, so perhaps the market for a local newspaper did not then exist. Later, in the nineteenth century the *Halifax Journal* was published from June 1801, becoming the *Wakefield and Halifax Journal* in February 1811.

There were means of distributing literature other than through centrally located bookshops and book auctions. The Reverend John Fawcett, who as we have seen earlier, was minister, scholar and author, was also a printer in his own right.<sup>21</sup> In 1796 he set up his own printing press at his home in Brearley Hall, which was transferred to Ewood Hall on his removal there later in the year. He also ran a school at Ewood Hall. According to his son:

...Mr F. had an opportunity of purchasing, at a cheap rate, a printing press, with a small quantity of type...he frequently amused himself

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<sup>19</sup> James Bolton, *An History of Fungusses [sic], Growing about Halifax, Volume 1*, Halifax: 1788; *Volume 2*, 1788; *Volume 3*, 1789; *Supplement*, 1791, Huddersfield: J. Brook.

<sup>20</sup> E. Jacob, *The History of the Town and Parish of Halifax*, Halifax: Jacob, [1789].

<sup>21</sup> See above 1.2.2 and 1.3.3.



with printing short pieces of original poetry, and selected from approved writers, for the use of his pupils, and for distribution in the neighbourhood...<sup>22</sup>

The imprint was short-lived as he disposed of his press in 1800 due to failing health.<sup>23</sup>

Another alternative supply of books, independent of bookshops and printers was informal circulation. One example is the works of the radical, Tom Paine who, influenced by the French Revolution wrote *The Rights of Man* 1792-3. John Fawcett, son of the Reverend John Fawcett, wrote of the mid-1790s:

...the writings of Paine against revelation were industriously circulated among the lower class, and infidelity appeared to be making rapid progress.<sup>24</sup>

To sum up - the wide range of publications contrasts with the late seventeenth century when religious publications were predominant. By the early nineteenth century religious works for all classes and schoolbooks for children extended readership far beyond a small number of the better educated.

### 3.1.3 Bookselling in Huddersfield

Bookselling in Huddersfield was of later origin than in Halifax because of Huddersfield's later economic development. However, in *The Commercial Directory* of 1816 under the heading "Booksellers, etc and Binders" there are eight names.<sup>25</sup> Baines' 1822 *Directory* lists seven booksellers, stationers and binders in Huddersfield including Thomas Smart (printer, depository of the Huddersfield

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<sup>22</sup> John Fawcett, *An Account of the Life, Ministry, and Writings of the Late Rev. John Fawcett D.D.*, 282.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, 290.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, 286.

<sup>25</sup> *The Commercial Directory for 1816-17*, 100.

Auxiliary Bible Society, and vender [sic] of patent medicines, dealer in music and paper hangings), King Street.<sup>26</sup> A variety of goods were sold in bookshops as can be seen in newspaper advertisements. Thomas Kemp took over a printing, bookselling and stationery business in Huddersfield in 1815 and offered:

...an entire new and choice Selection of Books, in general Literature, including an elegant Variety of the newest and most popular Publications of the Day, with an Assortment of Bibles, Testaments, Prayer Books, Hymn Books, etc. in plain and elegant Bindings, also Grammars, Dictionaries and other School Books...Printed neatly and expeditiously executed on modern Type...Writing Papers of every Description...Violoncellos, Violins...German Flutes, Fifes etc. Violoncello and Violin Strings, Bows, Pegs etc...An Assortment of the most useful and approved Genuine Patent Medicines. A newly selected Circulating Library. Magazines and other Periodical Publications regularly procured.<sup>27</sup>

The fact that booksellers in both Halifax and Huddersfield included other goods among their stock, particularly patent medicines, suggests that the market for books was not always profitable enough for retailers to make a living. Listings in directories indicate that by the second decade of the nineteenth century Huddersfield was as well supplied with bookshops as Halifax.

### **3.1.4 Printing in Huddersfield**

Printing began later in Huddersfield than in Halifax. The first printer in Huddersfield was John Brook (d.1784). On his death his business was taken over by his son Joseph. Thomas Smart, a printer in Huddersfield from 1800, wrote about working conditions in the book trade and specifically his employer Joseph Brook. According

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<sup>26</sup> Edward Baines, *History, Directory and Gazetteer, of the County of York, Vol. 1 West Riding*, 207.

<sup>27</sup> [Advertisement], *Leeds Intelligencer*, 63, 20 March 1815, 2.



to Smart's autobiographical letters, John Brook originally kept a small school. He then became a bookseller and printer:

From a person who had some knowledge of the bookselling and binding businesses, he received such an insight as enabled him to sell a few books, on a stall, in the markets, - and afterwards to follow that business in a shop. There being no printer in the town or neighbourhood, afforded an opportunity for beginning that business in a shop...<sup>28</sup>

The first work to be printed in Huddersfield was *Faith in God, and Good Works Connected being the Substance of a Sermon Preached June 17, 1778 at the Annual Meeting, Held at Heckmondwike in Yorkshire*, in 1778.<sup>29</sup> The imprints of early publications in Huddersfield are usually Brook or J. Brook, not John or Joseph Brook. Thomas Smart began to work for Joseph Brook around 1784 and he states in his letters that John Brook had died shortly before. John Brook would have printed the earliest publications in Huddersfield, but from about 1784 the printer would be Joseph Brook.<sup>30</sup> In 1784 Joseph Brook appeared in the imprint of *The Rush-Bearing: a Poem. With a Probable Account of the Rise of Wakes* by Ebenezer Hunt.<sup>31</sup> He was the only printer in Huddersfield until 1798 when he joined with Josiah Lancashire in printing Malthurin Cordier's *Corderii Colloquiorum Centuria Selecta. A Select Century of Corderius's Colloquies* and an edition of *The Letters of Junius*.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Thomas Smart, *The Prisoner: or, Cruelty Unmasked*, Huddersfield: Sikes, 1799, 77.

<sup>29</sup> William Moorhouse, *Faith in God, and Good Works Connected being the Substance of a Sermon Preached June 17, 1778 at the Annual Meeting, Held at Heckmondwike in Yorkshire*, Huddersfield: J. Brook, 1778.

<sup>30</sup> Thomas Smart, *The Prisoner: or, Cruelty Unmasked*, 78, 101.

<sup>31</sup> Ebenezer Hunt, *The Rush-Bearing: a Poem. With a Probable Account of the Rise of Wakes*, Huddersfield: Joseph Brook, 1784.

<sup>32</sup> Malthurin Cordier, *Corderii Colloquiorum Centuria Selecta. A Select Century of Corderius's Colloquies*, Huddersfield: Brook and Lancashire, 1798.  
Junius, *The Letters of Junius*, Huddersfield: Brook and Lancashire, 1798.



Brook and Lancashire were still printing in 1830 both in joint publications and separately. In 1798 the printer, Silvester Sikes or Sykes appears. Thomas Smart set up his own business in 1800. In the area of literature, there seems to be more literary works published in Huddersfield than in Halifax, for example, Sykes published *British Poetical Miscellany* in 1799 with a similar *British Prose Miscellany* in the same year.<sup>33</sup>

Local authors were not always well educated. A book by Mrs. Crowther appeared in 1802 on *Moral Tales and Poetical Essays*, which was printed by subscription after her death and the preface states:

It is lamented that the author was deprived of those advantages of education which her birth seemed to require, and which her singular genius would have done honor [sic] to.<sup>34</sup>

Books were published for young people, not all of which were basic school textbooks. Some were more specialised such as *Practical Hints to Young Astronomers, Calculated to Facilitate their Progress in the Most Interesting Part of that Delightful and Sublime Science, Namely the Findings of the Constellations in the Heavens* in 1822.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> *British Poetical Miscellany*, Huddersfield: Sikes, 1799.  
*British Prose Miscellany*, Huddersfield: Sikes, 1799.

<sup>34</sup> Mrs Crowther, *Moral Tales and Poetic Essays*, Huddersfield: Brook and Lancashire, 1802, Preface.

<sup>35</sup> R., R.H., *Practical Hints to Young Astronomers, Calculated to Facilitate their Progress in the Most Interesting Part of that Delightful and Sublime Science, Namely the Findings of the Constellations in the Heavens*, Huddersfield: Smart, 1822.

More books were published on politics in Huddersfield than in Halifax and they were often linked to religious controversy. The Reverend John Eagleton, for example, gave a sermon on *The Probable Destiny of Great Britain* in 1829.<sup>36</sup>

Practical specialised books also appeared such as William Pontey's *The Profitable Planter. A Treatise on the Cultivation of Larch and Scotch Fir Timber* and Tindall's *Yorkshire Farriery*.<sup>37</sup> These examples illustrate the wide range of reading material on sale in Huddersfield and elsewhere in the early nineteenth century.

### 3.2 READING AND PRIVATE COLLECTIONS

By the early nineteenth century reading and the collecting and informal lending of books was no longer confined to a small minority nor was it a male preserve. Contemporary publications, booksellers' and library catalogues clearly demonstrate which books were being read, but there is less evidence of individual reading. Most private libraries have been dispersed and the books no longer survive. Recording of reading can often be found in diaries. Few diaries have survived in their entirety, and even many extant diaries were only kept for a limited period of time. The diaries are those of educated people and are representative of the life of the middle classes. Much less is known of the working classes, whose personal records rarely survive.

Reading and studying are recorded in the diaries of three women living in Halifax parish in the early nineteenth century. They were not typical of most women

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<sup>36</sup> John Eagleton, *The Probable Destiny of Great Britain. A Sermon. Preached in Ramsden-Street Chapel, Huddersfield on Sunday, December 20th, 1829*, Huddersfield: William Moore, [1830].

<sup>37</sup> William Pontey, *The Profitable Planter. A Treatise on the Cultivation of Larch and Scotch Fir Timber*, Huddersfield: Sykes and Smart, 1800.  
John Tindall, *Tindall's Yorkshire Farriery*, Huddersfield: J. Lancashire, 1814.



at that time as they were from middle class and wealthier families and had received some education and had time to read. Anne Lister (1791-1840) of Shibden Hall, Halifax ran the estate, made social visits and travelled and also studied widely concentrating on the classics. She wrote 9 June 1817:

Read...Demosthenes...Leland's Translation. This is the 4th Greek work I have read thro' & I certainly feel considerably improved.<sup>38</sup>

Similarly, she wrote 24 March 1821

Before breakfast, from 7¼ to 9¼, & from 10¾ to 2 ½ (including an interruption of 20 minutes) read from v.1304 to 1527, end of *Philoctetes* of Sophocles, & afterwards from p.288 to 296, end of vol. 2, Adam's translation of the 7 remaining plays of Sophocles...I feel myself improved & only hope to continue going on prosperously.<sup>39</sup>

The second diarist is Caroline Walker (b.1774) of Waterclough, Southowram. She attended school, but she wrote of her early life:

I had learnt, at home, to draw by two different drawing masters...my father had taught me English, French, and Italian.<sup>40</sup>

Thereafter she was fond of reading Italian and French authors. She reveals 30 May 1817 that she has been reading 'Persian Tales':

I always had a taste for books of this kind, but I have applied myself for a long time to reading of a superior kind. I find that these tales have instructive morals, but they interest my imagination too much, so that I can scarcely quit them until I have almost stupefied myself.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Anne Lister, *I Know my Own Heart. The Diaries of Anne Lister 1791-1840*, ed. Helena Whitbread, 9.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid, 149.

<sup>40</sup> J. Lister, Waterclough, in Southowram, *Transactions of the Halifax Antiquarian Society*, 1908, 213.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, 236.



She did not make many social visits and unlike Anne Lister, who read to improve herself, her reason was given in the entry made 7 June 1827:

Reading I find my greatest satisfaction. It consoles me for the want of agreeable conversation. A book was always my resource. So long as it pleases the Almighty to enable me to see to read, I shall never feel ennui.<sup>42</sup>

And even after two social visits made 12 December 1828:

How insipid the conversation of most I meet with here. After being accustomed to read the best authors I have very little taste for such society...<sup>43</sup>

The third diary is that of Elizabeth Wadsworth (1759-1837), which does not begin until she reaches the age of 57 in 1817. She lived in Holdsworth House, Illingworth and spent her time managing her land, visiting and in charity work. Such an active life left little time for self-improvement or for seeking a substitute for reality. Her father, the Reverend John Wadsworth (c.1720-82) had collected a theological library, which she inherited.<sup>44</sup> She was constantly lending these books to clergy, both locally and in Bradford, thus illustrating the point that not all clergy could afford good libraries of their own. She also bought and read books, although only brief details are given, for example:

March 15 [1818] Read Chalmer's Discourses on Astronomy.<sup>45</sup>

There is evidence of informal lending in her diary: examples of books being lent in 1827 were:

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<sup>42</sup> J. Lister, Waterclough, in Southowram, 253.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid, 259.

<sup>44</sup> W.B. Trigg, Holdsworth House, *Transactions of the Halifax Antiquarian Society*, 1942, 39.

<sup>45</sup> W.B. Trigg, Miss Wadsworth's Diary. Volume One, *Transactions of the Halifax Antiquarian Society*, 1943, 131.

Jan. 4 Lent Mr. Ramsden 2 vols. of Homilies and Mrs. More's essays  
and

Feb. 6 Lent to Mr. J. Akroyd two Psalm books and [a] little tract of  
Sowerby Church.<sup>46</sup>

Arthur Jessop (1682-1751) of Holmfirth, an apothecary and member of  
Lydgate Presbyterian Church, was a member of Holmfirth Book Club, which is  
described in the section on book clubs later in this chapter.<sup>47</sup> He kept a diary which  
covers the period 1730-46 and includes entries on the borrowing and lending of  
newspapers particularly at the time of the Jacobite rebellion of 1745-6. The entry for  
15 March 1746 reads:

I hear that two French ships were got to Scotland and 3 more coming,  
and that the Rebels are at Inverness having forced Lord Loudon to  
Retreat, and that the Duke of Cumberland is at Aberdeen. I was at  
Hades at Mr Kenworthy's and borrowed the *Leeds Mercury* which he  
had borrowed at Holmfirth.<sup>48</sup>

Many people owned books and private libraries were  
accumulated. One notable collection was that of John Turner, lawyer of  
Huddersfield, who had a library of over 500 books in 1758. His attendance at book  
auctions is referred to in Chapter 2.<sup>49</sup> His books are listed alphabetically in a  
catalogue, which includes many classical, historical and legal books, but most of the  
books were legal reference texts. Nor was it a static collection as 'Here Kept' and

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<sup>46</sup> W.B. Trigg, Miss Wadsworth's Diary. Volume Two, *Transactions of the Halifax Antiquarian Society*, 1944, 86-7.

<sup>47</sup> See below 3.4.

<sup>48</sup> *Three Huddersfield Diaries. The Diary of Arthur Jessop*, 125-6.

<sup>49</sup> See above 2.1.

'Sold' sometimes appear in the margin.<sup>50</sup> This collection became part of the Huddersfield Archaeological and Topographical Association (later the Yorkshire Archaeological Society) library.<sup>51</sup>

To sum up - these few sources illustrate the wide range of reading at that time: classical works for self-improvement, lighter reading for entertainment, Italian and French authors, religious books, historical works, newspapers and legal books for professional use.

### 3.3 LIBRARIES ASSOCIATED WITH SCHOOLS

School textbooks were being published and sold locally by the nineteenth century. Clearly schoolmasters, as educated men would have their own books and it is not always possible to distinguish between the master's library and the school library.

At Rishworth School interest in books was evident from its foundation when John Wheelwright bequeathed books to the school as noted in Chapter 2.<sup>52</sup> At Hipperholme Grammar School a library is mentioned in the diary of Caroline Walker. Richard Hudson was master 1782-1835. She refers to a robbery in 1825:

Tuesday 20th September. Mr. Hudson's library at the school had been robbed of a quantity of books.<sup>53</sup>

The Reverend John Murgatroyd (c.1719-1806) was master of Slaithwaite Free School 1738-86, which had been formed in connection with St. James Church,

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<sup>50</sup> Kirklees District Archives, KC 275/2, John Turner, *A Catalogue of all the Books...belonging to John Turner of Huddersfield in September 1758*.

<sup>51</sup> See below 5.6.2.

<sup>52</sup> See above 2.4.

<sup>53</sup> J. Lister, Waterclough, in Southowram, 248.



Slaithwaite. He was the son of a blacksmith in Halifax parish. In a testimonial dated 1737 he was described as:

a sedate, thinking and promising boy; who reads the following authors, viz.- Greek Testament, Homer, Juvenal, and Persius, with tolerable judgement, and makes exercises answerable thereto.<sup>54</sup>

He was in holy orders from 1754 in addition to his school duties. He officiated at services at surrounding churches including the church at Slaithwaite. Perhaps he was able to use the ministers' library, but he had his own collection of books. He bequeathed his property to his niece Hannah Mellor.<sup>55</sup>

He left a diary and other manuscripts including *A Cornucopia or a Collection of Weighty Extracts* dating from around 1742-5 in which he listed books usually read in schools. These were classical works with classical grammars and dictionaries.<sup>56</sup> A longer list appears in 1794 in a manuscript notebook of authors useful to be read at school. The books listed were his own property, not the school library as by this time he had retired as schoolmaster. The list comprised 205 books, 130 in English, 62 in Latin and 13 in Greek. Many of the English books were sermons and other religious works, which would have been useful to him in his service as a minister. Some spelling books, grammar and arithmetic books were included.<sup>57</sup>

James Horsfall, the son of the village blacksmith, was a promising pupil at the school who later became a member of the Royal Society. He wrote to his uncle Daniel Eagland in London about his progress in 1745:

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<sup>54</sup> Charles A. Hulbert, *Annals of the Church in Slaithwaite*, 52.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid, 59.

<sup>56</sup> York University, Slaithwaite Collection, John Murgatroyd, *A Cornucopia*, c.1745, 919.

<sup>57</sup> York University, Slaithwaite Collection, John Murgatroyd, *Manuscript Notebook*, c.1745-1802.

...I have, with the leave of my father, taken the opportunity to acquaint you with my progress in the Latin tongue, as follows - I read these Books to wit, Grammar, Latin Testament, Aesop's Fables, and Clark's Erasmus, and my master says, with tolerable knowledge. Also I write exercises out of Bailey, and have familiar forms with Cole's Dictionary...<sup>58</sup>

Perhaps John Murgatroyd as a blacksmith's son himself wished to encourage a boy from a similar background.

These few examples refer to the use of books in education, but there are only a few references to school libraries, both locally and nationally, before the nineteenth century. Their history is continued in Chapter 5.<sup>59</sup>

### 3.4 BOOK CLUBS

Book clubs were widespread in England from the mid-eighteenth century. A pioneering article by Paul Kaufman on book clubs and their social impact first appeared in 1964. He discussed their nature and the fragmentary evidence for their existence. He also attempted a census of English book clubs and reading societies and among those identified eight were in Yorkshire, including Halifax and Holmfirth.<sup>60</sup> Since then many more have been located.

There is little evidence for most clubs. The existence of a book club may be known only through diaries, or a book label may be the sole source of identification. Little is known about their organisation, collections or membership. There is no means of knowing how many clubs there were in England. There was no national movement with a central organisation, and there were many variations.

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<sup>58</sup> John Murgatroyd, *Village Gleanings*, ed. Henry James Morehouse, Huddersfield: Parkin, 1886, 19-20.

<sup>59</sup> See below 5.3.

<sup>60</sup> Paul Kaufman, English Book Clubs and their Role in Social History, *Libri*, 14(1), 1964, 4-8.



Educated people possessed their own books and there was informal lending. Lending could become formalised through book clubs. They were clubs and as such had an important social function, particularly as they were not confined to large towns. Many of them were housed or held their meetings in local inns, which emphasises the social aspect.

Learned societies and reading societies may have had much in common with book clubs, as did the more substantial subscription libraries, and there is much overlap between them. Their members were from similar middle class backgrounds; the difference was one of organisation. Book clubs differed from earlier libraries in that they were not usually connected with churches, chapels or schools. They were usually secular organisations, although ministers of religion were often prominent members. In many ways they were forerunners of the later, larger and better documented subscription libraries. Book clubs differed in that they had smaller and less permanent collections. They did not involve extensive premises or salaried librarians. Books were often stored in the local inn: sometimes they were sold annually. The subscription library provided for shares for its members and functioned through the annual meeting, whereas the book club met regularly, usually monthly.<sup>61</sup>

According to Kaufman, Halifax Book Club was formed by 1740 and Holmfirth Book Club from c.1740, which makes them the earliest book clubs in Yorkshire. The Luddenden Library began c.1770. The smaller towns of Settle and Sedbergh had the Settle Literary Society and the Sedbergh Book Club from 1770

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<sup>61</sup> Paul Kaufman, *English Book Clubs and their Role in Social History*, 3.



and 1782 respectively.<sup>62</sup> No date is given for the formation of the Leeds Holbeck Book Society, which was established by 1824.<sup>63</sup> Halifax and Holmfirth had book clubs over 50 years earlier than Bradford and Leeds, although the evidence is incomplete. Little is known of the Halifax Club and we are indebted to Arthur Jessop, who as noted in the section on reading and private collections, was a member of Holmfirth Book Club.<sup>64</sup> When the formation of a Holmfirth Book Club was being considered, he wrote 7 February 1741:

I was at Holmfirth to speak to Mr Thompson we were speaking of setting up a Club for Books in Holmfirth. Mr Thompson would have us continue in the Halifax Club.<sup>65</sup>

In addition his diary entry for 24 August 1741 reads:

I was at Holmfirth at Danl Thorps with a book from Mr Thompson belonging to the Halifax Club.<sup>66</sup>

By 1768 the book club had ceased to exist, but the Halifax Circulating Library, which had been set up in that year and which is covered in the section on subscription libraries, purchased some of the books. It also must have been substantial enough to have a catalogue, because at a meeting of the Circulating Library 14 December of that year it was:

ordered That such Books in the foregoing Catalogue as are marked x may be purchase of the late Halifax Book Club at the Price valued by N. Binns.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Paul Kaufman, *English Book Clubs and their Role in Social History*, 8.

<sup>63</sup> Holbeck Book Society, *A Catalogue of Books in the Library of the Holbeck Book Society [1824]*, Leeds: Pickard, 1824.

<sup>64</sup> See above 3.2.

<sup>65</sup> *Three Huddersfield Diaries. The Diary of Arthur Jessop*, 57.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid*, 64.

<sup>67</sup> Calderdale District Archives, MISC:49/2, Halifax Circulating Library, *Minutes 1768-97*. See below 3.5.1.

The Holmfirth Book Club was formed in February 1741 and its date of foundation has been listed as c.1740.<sup>68</sup> There is, however, evidence of a book club as early as 1735, as Jessop wrote 5 May:

I was at Jonas Hobsons at Wooldale at Auction of the Books belonging to the Club on thursday May 1st. Mr Thos Moorhouse was there and was ordered to buy Pope's Homer if he could buy it for 8/- but Dr Nettleton bid 12/- for them and had them.<sup>69</sup>

And the entry for 27 September 1737 reads:

I paid Mr Richd Cook 2/- for forfeits for not going to the Club and spent there 2/6...<sup>70</sup>

Jonas Hobson of Wooldale was a member of the later club. He was responsible for purchasing the books from Mr. Swale of Leeds. Jessop wrote 29 May 1741:

I was at Wooldale at Jonas Hobsons and sent money by him to Leeds to pay Mr Swale for the Club Books.<sup>71</sup>

At Holmfirth fines were levied for lateness and absence and a certain standard of behaviour was expected, as there were fines for swearing. For example, Jessop wrote:

7 April 1743 I was at the Club at Joshua Woofendens and received 2/6 forfeitures [sic] and 4d for swearing in the Club Time...<sup>72</sup>

There was no set meeting place nor was there a permanent collection of books.

Meetings took place in members' homes as Jessop wrote 6 January 1743:

I was at Dan Thorp's at the Club and Auction we sold up all the Books...I had 4/7 in my hands and I sold the books for £2 15s. 6d. so that I have £3 0s. 1d. in stock to get the new Club with besides 2/6 which Jno Tinker paid who was admitted a member.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Paul Kaufman, *English Book Clubs and their Role in Social History*, 8.

<sup>69</sup> *Three Huddersfield Diaries. The Diary of Arthur Jessop*, 25.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid*, 35-6.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid*, 61.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid*, 78-9.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid*, 76.



Holmfirth Book Club members were educated and were from the wealthier sections of local society and included such people as the Reverend William Thompson (d.1743), Curate of Holmfirth 1711-43, the Reverend William Eden, Presbyterian Minister of Lydgate Chapel 1734-46 and James Crosland, schoolmaster at Holme.<sup>74</sup> Jessop's diary ends in 1746, so no more is known about the club. In the Halifax and Huddersfield areas the Halifax Book Club and the Huddersfield Book Club are the only book clubs listed by Kaufman, but it is known that there were several others. There must, for example, have been a book club at Almondbury because of the following unfortunate occurrence described by Jessop 7 June 1745:

I hear that Mr Daniel Dyson of Crosland died at Mr Marret's at the Horns at Huddersfield yesterday at the Club and the Company knew nothing of it till he was expiring.

Almondbury people had a Club on the same day that we have ours at Holmfirth and some of Honley and Huddersfield and Mr Harrop and several others are members of that Club, and he (Mr Dyson) died suddenly among them.<sup>75</sup>

Another book club was the Honley Book Club, which was started in 1750 and was listed in an addenda to Kaufman's original article in 1969.<sup>76</sup> It was in existence until 1823, nearly 73 years. For 50 years it met at the George and Dragon Inn and attracted members from the leading families in the area. The books in the library included Smollet's *History of England*, which was in great demand, novels by Smollet, Goldsmith's *Vicar of Wakefield* and Cervantes' *Don Quixote*, history and

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<sup>74</sup> *Three Huddersfield Diaries. The Diary of Arthur Jessop*, 24, 61.

Henry James Morehouse, *The History and Topography of the Parish of Kirkburton and the Graveship of Holme*, 165.

<sup>75</sup> *Three Huddersfield Diaries. The Diary of Arthur Jessop*, 100.

<sup>76</sup> Paul Kaufman, *Libraries and their Users. Collected Papers in Library History*, London: Library Association, 1969, 64.



books on travel and magazines such as the *Spectator* and *Tatler*.<sup>77</sup> Evidence for a book club at Meltham appears in an account of a scientific experiment before club members by John Nowell in 1809.<sup>78</sup>

Most book clubs were not connected to churches and chapels, but there were exceptions. The Reverend John Fawcett set up a circulating library during his ministry at Wainsgate Church, near Hebden Bridge 1764-77. His son wrote:

...A taste for reading was encouraged, by the loan of books; a small circulating library was formed out of the minister's own collection, increased by a small quarterly contribution in the church and congregation.<sup>79</sup>

John Fawcett also set up a more general book society in Heptonstall in conjunction with the Reverend Dan Taylor, Minister of Birchcliffe Baptist Church, Hebden Bridge.<sup>80</sup> Both Fawcett and Taylor were examples of self-educated men as has been noted.<sup>81</sup> Adam Taylor, son of Dan Taylor, wrote in 1820:

The pious and intelligent ministers who formed a plan, were careful to secure a selection of books proper for general reading; which chiefly consisted of works on divinity, biography, travels, etc. and took frequent opportunities of instructing their friends in the most beneficial mode of using them.<sup>82</sup>

There were two book societies in Brighouse in 1789, which seemed to have religious links. Thomas Stutterd, a member of Salendine Nook Baptist Church, Huddersfield, wrote 28 June 1789:

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<sup>77</sup> Mary A. Jagger, *The History of Honley and its Hamlets from the Earliest Times to the Present*, Huddersfield: Jubb, 1914, Reprint, Holmfirth: Toll House, 1985, 24-7.

<sup>78</sup> Alfred Easter, *A Glossary of the Dialect of Almondbury and Huddersfield*, London: Trübner for the English Dialect Society, 1883, xiv.

<sup>79</sup> John Fawcett, *An Account of the Life, Ministry, and Writings of the Late Rev. John Fawcett, D.D.*, 169.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid, 169.

<sup>81</sup> See above 1.3.3.

<sup>82</sup> Adam Taylor, *Memoirs of the Rev. Dan Taylor*, 31.

There are two book clubs in Brighthouse besides. The Calvinists and Arminian for divinity.<sup>83</sup>

On a more political level, a reading club and debating society was formed in Illingworth in Ovenden township, Halifax parish. Although not connected with a church, it thrived in the late 1790s when there was much controversy between Wesleyan Methodist and New Connexion Methodists, against a background of the war with France. J.U. Walker, the historian of Halifax Wesleyan Methodism writing in 1836, attributed the secession at Bradshaw Chapel and the conduct of the secessionists to Paineite ideas:

admirers of that detestable knot of scorpions, whose works have infused so much poison through the land.<sup>84</sup>

Of the reading club he wrote:

Amid these hills however, a reading club, together with a debating society unfortunately was formed, to which the detestable works of Paine were admitted. Strange as it may seem, this club was not only joined by many of the members of the Wesleyan Congregation but of the society also, and doubtless proved the principal cause of the future disturbances.<sup>85</sup>

By the nineteenth century more specialised book clubs were being formed. The Huddersfield Medical Library was formed in 1814 at the same time as the formation of the Huddersfield dispensary. In 1825 a medical society, which was closely associated with the library, was set up. Both the library and the society were only open to qualified medical practitioners.<sup>86</sup> In W.J. Bishop's pioneering article on

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<sup>83</sup> Percy Stocks, *Foundations [of Salendine Nook Baptist Church]*, Halifax: Mortimer, 1933, 167.

<sup>84</sup> J.U. Walker, *A History of Wesleyan Methodism in Halifax*, Halifax: Hartley and Walker; London: Simpkin and Marshall, 1836, 218.

<sup>85</sup> J.U. Walker, *A History of Wesleyan Methodism in Halifax*, 217.

<sup>86</sup> Hilary Marland, *Medicine and Society in Wakefield and Huddersfield 1780-1870*, Cambridge University Press, 1987, 304-5.



medical book societies in England in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, it is noted that such book clubs and societies began to be formed from 1770.<sup>87</sup> Huddersfield is not mentioned in the article, but it was clearly part of the general trend as the foundation of provincial infirmaries from the mid-eighteenth century provided an impetus for the formation of medical libraries and Huddersfield Medical Library was set up at the same time as the dispensary. Bishop describes some medical book societies, for example, Liverpool Medical Library was established in the 1770s. Bristol had several medical societies and clubs. A Suffolk Medical Book Society was set up in 1824. The one example from Yorkshire to be included is the Medico-Chirurgical Book Society of Sheffield formed in 1834.<sup>88</sup> The history of the Huddersfield Medical Library is continued in Chapter 5.<sup>89</sup>

## **3.5 SUBSCRIPTION LIBRARIES**

### **3.5.1 Halifax Circulating Library**

Many large towns and several smaller ones had subscription libraries as described by Frank Beckwith in his 1947 article on eighteenth century proprietary libraries in England.<sup>90</sup> Yorkshire was relatively well served and in the Halifax and Huddersfield areas both had at least one, as well as the Luddenden Library, and a few smaller ones. In Halifax a subscription library was formed as early as December 1768.

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<sup>87</sup> W.J. Bishop, Medical Book Societies in England in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries, *Bulletin of the Medical Library Association*, 45(3), July 1957, 337-50.

<sup>88</sup> W.J. Bishop, Medical Book Societies in England in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries, 337-43, 348.

<sup>89</sup> See below 5.6.5.

<sup>90</sup> Frank Beckwith, The Eighteenth-century Proprietary Library in England, *Journal of Documentation*, 3, September 1947, 81-98.



Despite the term 'circulating library' which was usually used to denote a commercial library, it was a subscription library.

The Liverpool Library had started in 1758 and was the earliest English proprietary library. The Manchester Circulating Library was formed in 1765. Leeds followed the example of Liverpool, as did several other libraries.<sup>91</sup> The proposals to establish a library in Halifax may have been influenced by the example of the Leeds Library, which commenced in September 1768, three months before Halifax.<sup>92</sup> However, Halifax Circulating Library was modelled not on the Leeds Library, but on the Liverpool and Manchester libraries. The rules of both these libraries were obtained for guidance in setting up the library at Halifax and most of the Halifax rules were selected from them.<sup>93</sup> The proposals intended the library:

to give all Lovers of Reading, an Opportunity of perusing a Collection of the best ENGLISH Books, at a very moderate Expense...<sup>94</sup>

The support of 'Gentlemen' was solicited:

These Proposals are directed to Gentlemen in different Parts of the Country, as well as the Town, who are desired to communicate them to such as their Neighbours and Acquaintance, as they think are likely to enter into the Scheme, but who, through Accident, have not been directly applied to.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Francis Gibbons, *The Pre-1850 Libraries of Liverpool and their Origins, Collections, Users and their Subsequent History*, Ph.D., Strathclyde University, 1984, 52-3.

<sup>92</sup> Frank Beckwith, *The Leeds Library 1768-1968*, 2nd rev. ed., Leeds: Leeds Library, 1994, 4-6.

<sup>93</sup> Calderdale District Archives, MISC:5/96a/79, Halifax Circulating Library, *Proposals for Establishing a Circulating Library in Halifax, 1768*.

<sup>94</sup> Calderdale District Archives, MISC:5/96a/79, Halifax Circulating Library, *Proposals for Establishing a Circulating Library in Halifax, 1768*.

<sup>95</sup> Calderdale District Archives, SPL:5/96a/79, Halifax Circulating Library, *Proposals for Establishing Circulating Library in Halifax, 1768*, 4.

The library was intended from the start as a middle class venture for 'gentlemen'. In September 1802 the minutes point out that the Library Room was for subscribers only:

Ordered, that the Library Room being for the use of Subscribers only, No Servants, Children, or other persons not being Subscribers shall be permitted to continue in it longer than may be necessary for transacting the business, on which they may have been sent...<sup>96</sup>

This and similar rules make it clear that library membership was confined to the wealthier sections of society. Indeed, many people were employed as servants and it is assumed that they, like children, would not be subscribers. The entrance fee of one guinea with five shillings per annum thereafter acted as a further disincentive to those of limited means.

The Halifax Circulating Library has been described elsewhere, so no detailed analysis will be made here.<sup>97</sup> The well-known families of Rawson, Alexander and Waterhouse were represented. Although the subscription library was an organisation in its own right and did not have any religious affiliation, the clergy were well represented amongst the membership owing to their social standing. The Reverend Dr. George Legh, Vicar of Halifax 1731-75, and the Reverend John Ralph, Minister of Northgate End Unitarian Chapel 1766-95, were among the originators of the library. A vicar of Halifax was usually a member of the committee, including the Reverend Dr. Henry Coulthurst, Vicar 1790-1817, and the Reverend Samuel Knight, Vicar 1817-32. The Reverend John Fawcett, himself the founder of a book club, as

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<sup>96</sup> Calderdale District Archives, MISC:49/3, Halifax Circulating Library, *Orders and Transactions 1797-1820*.

<sup>97</sup> E.P. Rouse, *Old Halifax Circulating Library 1768-1866*, 45-59.



noted in the previous section, was a member and this is yet another example of his literary interests.<sup>98</sup> It was undenominational, both Anglican and nonconformist being represented. A few women were members: it was not exclusively male. By 1792 there were as many as 154 members, including 11 clergymen and 25 women.<sup>99</sup> By 1817, the women members included Anne Lister, whose diary has been noted in the earlier section on reading and private collections.<sup>100</sup> She comments in more detail 10 January 1818:

Walked to Halifax...Read 1½ hours at the library...No books delivered out today nor are there to be till next Tuesday 3 weeks, 3 February, when the new room adjoining the theatre will be opened. They are calling in the books to see what repairs are wanted & are to begin to remove to the new room next week. In the meantime the old library room will be open as usual & tho' you may take no books away, you may read them.<sup>101</sup>

Like all societies the library had a set of rules, which from the minutes seem to have been strictly adhered to, but in practice, there were exceptions, as Anne Lister wrote 4 January 1820:

Gave the librarian five shillings as I said, last September, I would do every half-year on condition of his managing to let me have as many books at a time as I wanted. Not, however, that I think of exceeding the regulated allowance by more than two.<sup>102</sup>

The other female diarists mentioned in the reading and private collections section, Caroline Walker and Elizabeth Wadsworth, make no reference to the library.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> See above 3.4.

<sup>99</sup> Halifax Circulating Library, *A Catalogue of the Books in the Circulating Library at Halifax*, Halifax: Jacobs, 1793, 116-9.

<sup>100</sup> See above 3.2.

<sup>101</sup> Anne Lister, *I Know my Own Heart. The Diaries of Anne Lister 1791-1840*, ed. Helena Whitbread, 35.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid*, 113.

<sup>103</sup> See above 3.2.



Elizabeth spent much of her time in Bradford and appears to have been a member of the Bradford Subscription Library, as illustrated in her diary entry for 6 March 1818:

Met Mr. Disney Alexander in Bradford: got Chalinor's sermon on the death of Princess Charlotte from the Library.<sup>104</sup>

The Halifax library rented premises. It probably started in the Old Cock Yard and moved three times before remaining in rooms at Harrison Lane from 1824 to 1869. It was open at first on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons 12-3, but by 1824 it was open daily except Sunday, to deal with increase in use.

A catalogue was published in 1830. The number of book titles had by this time reached 2,748 with a considerably larger number of volumes. The subject arrangement was as follows:

Class I	Mental and Moral Philosophy and Education	135
Class II	Law, Politics, Political Economy and Commerce	163
Class III	Mathematics, Natural Science and the Mechanical Arts	193
Class IV	Biography, History, Chronology and Antiquities	767
Class V	Geography, Topography and Travels	554
Class VI	Poetry and Plays, and Polite Literature, including the Fine Arts	426
Class VII	Novels, Romances and Tales	510. <sup>105</sup>

Although catalogues survive in which plays, novels, biography, history and travel are predominant, there are no loan records, so there is no means of telling how the subject categories relate to the loans. However, some books were so worn out that they were replaced, for example, in March 1804:

...also the following being worn out the Committee ordered New Editions of them, viz:

Robinson Crusoe  
Richardson's Clarissa

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<sup>104</sup> W.B. Trigg, *Miss Wadsworth's Diary*. Volume One, 130.

<sup>105</sup> *Halifax Circulating Library, A Catalogue of Books belonging to the Halifax Subscription Library [1830]*, Halifax: Whitley, 1830.

Mrs Radcliffe's Romance of the Forest  
Miss Burney's Evelina.<sup>106</sup>

This clearly illustrates that some of the books, which were read the most, were fiction. A later example of catalogue and library use was made in Anne Lister's diary. She records in 1836:

Tuesday 1 [March 1836]

...looking over the H-x [sic] Library catalogue for books on travel in Germany to be sent for this afternoon.<sup>107</sup>

There is a notable absence of religious works and only a few classical works. Given the dominant part played by religion in the lives of most people and the presence of ministers of religion on the committee, it seems a surprising omission. In September 1790 the following resolution had been passed:

Ordered, That no Sermons, Work of Divinity, Religious Controversy, or on Subjects of Religion be hereafter purchased by the Committee for the use of the Library.<sup>108</sup>

The 'no politics, no religion' rule was often a feature of late eighteenth and early nineteenth century societies. It was indicative of the force of contemporary religious and political controversy rather than a deliberate anti-religious stance. In politics members changed their minds more than once about Cobbett, and bought some of the works of Peter Pindar, the political satirist.<sup>109</sup> The social composition of the library membership and number of books may seem to testify to its success, but Edward Baines' *History, Directory and Gazetteer* in 1822 was more critical:

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<sup>106</sup> Calderdale District Archives, MISC:49/3, Halifax Circulating Library, *Orders and Transactions 1797-1820*.

<sup>107</sup> Jill Liddington, *Female Fortune, Land, Gender and Authority. The Anne Lister Diaries and Writings 1833-36*, London and New York: Rivers Oram Press, 1998, 208.

<sup>108</sup> Calderdale District Archives, MISC:49/2, Halifax Circulating Library, *Minutes 1768-97*.

<sup>109</sup> E.P. Rouse, *Old Halifax Circulating Library, 1768-1866*, 56.



There is a Subscription Library of some extent, at Ward's-end, but a great portion of the books are in a mutilated state, and too many of the works are in the class of novels.<sup>110</sup>

The damaged state of the books implies lack of care by both librarian and readers, on the other hand, the worn condition indicates that the collection was extensively used. Moreover, in 1814 the number on the list of subscribers was 160. Eight deceased members were included suggesting a failure to update the list.<sup>111</sup> In effect there were 152 members, two less than in 1792 so membership had remained fairly static. The history of the library is continued in Chapter 5.<sup>112</sup>

### **3.5.2 Huddersfield Subscription Library**

Huddersfield had a subscription library, but it was not founded until 1807, 38 years after the formation of the Halifax Circulating Library. This was partly because Huddersfield was slower to develop economically than Halifax. Little is known of the early history of the library, but a list of 42 of the first members survives. They were all from middle class families: manufacturers, surgeons and solicitors. The one female member was the sister of a solicitor.<sup>113</sup> Mr. Whitacre of Woodhouse, one of the founder members, was nephew to the Reverend Dr. Henry Coulthurst, Vicar of Halifax 1790-1817, who was secretary of the Halifax Circulating Library at the time of the establishment of the Huddersfield Subscription Library in 1807.<sup>114</sup> It is possible therefore that some Halifax advice was sought at its formation. In contrast

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<sup>110</sup> Edward Baines, *History, Directory and Gazetteer, of the County of York, Vol. 1 West Riding*, 187.

<sup>111</sup> Halifax Circulating Library, [*Catalogue 1814*], 114-6.

<sup>112</sup> See below 5.5.2.

<sup>113</sup> G.W. Tomlinson, *Some Account of the Founders of the Huddersfield Subscription Library* Huddersfield: Daily Chronicle, 1875.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid*, 75.

Calderdale District Archives, MISC:49/2, Halifax Circulating Library, *Minutes 1768-97*.



to Halifax, there was only one minister of religion among the 42 members, but he was the Reverend John Coates, Vicar of Huddersfield, who was one of the founders. With 42 members, it had a much smaller membership than the Halifax Circulating Library which, as we have seen, had 151 members in 1792.<sup>115</sup> The library never had its own building, but was housed at booksellers. At its formation the librarian was Mr. F. Moon, described as “Bookseller, Corner of Cloth-Hall Street.” Baines' *Directory* of 1822 lists Joseph Brook of Westgate as printer, subscription library and vender [sic] of patent medicines, and William Moore, also of Westgate, as “printer, librarian to the new subscription library, dealer in paper hangings, music and musical instruments.”<sup>116</sup> Joseph Brook printed the library catalogue in 1834 and the subscription library was on his premises in 1837.<sup>117</sup> So it is probable that the library was at Joseph Brook's bookshop in 1822.

At first the library bought books on voyages, travels, biography, history and theology and no novels were included:

...it was not until all the world went mad about the Waverley Novels that the rule was broken, as even the stern law of the Subscription Library had to yield to the wand of "The Magician of the North!"<sup>118</sup>

The library catalogue of 1831 is arranged alphabetically by author and title. The highest book number is 660, but many books were multi-volumed: number 149

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<sup>115</sup> G.W. Tomlinson, *Some Account of the Founders of the Huddersfield Subscription Library*, 86-9. See above 3.5.1.

<sup>116</sup> Edward Baines, *History, Directory and Gazetteer, of the County of York, Vol. 1 West Riding*, 207.

<sup>117</sup> William White, *History, Gazetteer, and Directory, of the West-Riding of Yorkshire [1837]*, Sheffield: Leader, 1837, Vol. 1, 380.

<sup>118</sup> G.W. Tomlinson, *Some Account of the Founders of the Huddersfield Subscription Library*, 54.

*Constable's Miscellany* had 71 volumes at one number.<sup>119</sup> So there were far more volumes than book titles. In 1837 the library was described as having "upwards of 4,000 volumes". It was still smaller than the Halifax Circulating Library with "upwards of 7,000 volumes".<sup>120</sup> The catalogue is alphabetical rather than being divided by subject category so the number of books on each subject is not immediately apparent, but there appears to be a higher number of works of fiction and more popular works, which is borne out by the inclusion of 71 volumes of *Constable's Miscellany*, 22 volumes of *Murray's Family Library* and 11 volumes of the *Library of Entertaining Knowledge*. All these series began in the late 1820s and were intended to put reading in reach of working men, but were still too expensive for them.<sup>121</sup> The library continued in existence until 1906.<sup>122</sup>

### 3.5.3 Luddenden Library

The Luddenden Library was in Midgley township, Halifax parish and was started at the Lord Nelson Inn in 1776 or earlier. Tradition holds that a former vicar of Luddenden left a large number of books, mostly of a theological character, to form a library. It was in the form of a proprietary library, but there were monthly social meetings which made it more like a book club. Unlike subscription libraries which were usually in towns, it was in a rural area and in this respect was similar to some book clubs. It has attracted attention from writers: Paul Kaufman in his article on

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<sup>119</sup> Huddersfield Subscription Library, *A Catalogue of Books belonging to the Huddersfield Subscription Library [1831]*, Huddersfield: J. Brook, 1831.

<sup>120</sup> William White, *History, Gazetteer, and Directory, of the West-Riding of Yorkshire [1837]*, Vol. 1, 365, 403.

<sup>121</sup> J.F.C. Harrison, *Learning and Living 1790-1960. A Study in the History of the Adult Education Movement*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1961, 34.

<sup>122</sup> See below 5.4.2.



book clubs described it as "the most picturesque of all known reading societies."<sup>123</sup> Thomas Kelly in his book *Early Public Libraries*, called it a "rather unusual library" and included a page on it in his chapter on early subscription libraries.<sup>124</sup> It has a special interest, as it has a rather tenuous connection with Branwell Brontë. He visited the inn in 1841-2 when he worked as a clerk at Luddendenfoot railway station, but he was never a member.<sup>125</sup> There was an imaginative article in the *Leeds Mercury* in 1898 giving a rather romantic description of the library. It was written by John Longbottom and includes recollections of the library by John Wormald dated from 1871 when he began to assist his uncle Joshua Wormald with his duties as library secretary. He wrote about the library and some of its traditions, which in a small rural community with many families interrelated, would have been preserved. He emphasised the social side of the library with its meetings and annual dinner:

...We can fancy in the days when railways were not, and pack-horses were, many yeomen, farmers, manufacturers, schoolmasters - yea and even the village parson - wending their way on the "Library Night" (the first Tuesday in the month) to the ancient hostelry opposite the church gates, and after an hour spent in the exchange of books, adjourning to the bar-parlour below - or, if a very full meeting, to the great parlour, where mirth, speech, and song, and political and literary matters were discussed ad lib...<sup>126</sup>

Some original documents survive from the early years of the library's existence. They show a membership of around 24, some of whom were women. Widow Patchett, Mary Patchett and Widow Clay appear in the annual list of members for some of the years 1799-1822. Loan registers indicate active usage, but as they only

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<sup>123</sup> Paul Kaufman, *English Book Clubs and their Role in Social History*, 21.

<sup>124</sup> Thomas Kelly, *Early Public Libraries*, 139-40.

<sup>125</sup> Daphne Du Maurier, *The Infernal World of Branwell Brontë*, London: Gollancz, 1960, 121.

<sup>126</sup> John Longbottom, *Local Notes and Queries*, Number 1,042, "Ye Olde Luddenden Librarye", *Leeds Mercury*, 18,946, 24 December 1898, Weekly Supplement, 12.



include the numbers of the books and not the titles, they do not reveal which were the most popular books in the library.<sup>127</sup> However, a list of damages to books was kept 1776-96: it records tears, stains and candle grease. These damages suggest heavy usage, for example, the well-known novels *Roderick Random* and *Tom Jones* were both in need of repair.<sup>128</sup> The main expenses of the library were the purchase, binding and repair of books, together with candles – as both private and public meetings would be held by candlelight at this time.<sup>129</sup>

### 3.5.4 Brighouse Subscription Library

Brighouse had a subscription library, which began about 1784. Thomas Stutterd of Salendine Nook Baptist, Huddersfield wrote in 1789:

June 28th, 1789. I bid 10/6 for a share in Brighouse Library. The Library about 3 year stand [sic]. I am told there is a valuable collection of books, but not much divinity. I was asked 15/- but suppose I shall be taken.<sup>130</sup>

It lasted throughout most of the nineteenth century and is referred to again briefly in Chapter 5, but there appears to be no evidence of its membership or contents.<sup>131</sup>

### 3.5.5 Other Subscription Libraries

There are a few individual pieces of evidence, which indicate the existence of other subscription libraries in the area. In Halifax a library described as a public library

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<sup>127</sup> Calderdale District Archives, SPL:236, Luddenden Library, *Memorandum Book 1789-1822*.

<sup>128</sup> Calderdale District Archives, SPL:237, Luddenden Library, *Records of Damages Suffered to Each Book 1776-96*.

<sup>129</sup> Calderdale District Archives, SPL:236, Luddenden Library, *Memorandum Book 1789-1822*.

<sup>130</sup> Percy Stocks, *Foundations [of Salendine Nook Baptist Church]*, 166-7.

<sup>131</sup> R. Mitchell, *Brighouse. Portrait of a Town*, Brighouse: Brighouse Corporation, 1953, 158. See below 5.4.6.

originated at a meeting of dissenters in 1823 in the Old Cock Yard.<sup>132</sup> Todmorden had a book club that was later known as Todmorden Old Library from 1798. There were two other libraries: the Toadcarr Library from 1817 and Crosslee Library a few years later. They were united under the name Harleywood Library, which after some years due to theological disagreements, was discontinued.<sup>133</sup>

### 3.6 COMMERCIAL CIRCULATING LIBRARIES

There were some commercial circulating libraries in Halifax and Huddersfield by 1822 according to Baines' *Directory*, but little is known about them.<sup>134</sup> They were usually attached to booksellers' shops perhaps combined with printing, binding and the sale of other goods. Thus they were a means of supplementary income. They were managed by booksellers with a knowledge of the book trade. Those who frequented bookshops may also have been familiar with their circulating libraries, as they occupied the same premises and perhaps chose the cheaper option of borrowing rather than buying books. The Huddersfield bookseller, Joseph Brook, may have had a library before 1799, as his employee, Thomas Smart, wrote in his autobiography on responding to a remark:

I immediately turned to the library in the room, to conceal a laugh at such arrogance.<sup>135</sup>

In 1822 Martha Simpson kept a library in Crown Street, Halifax and in Huddersfield the bookseller, Thomas Kemp, also had a library, which was in New Street. Edward

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<sup>132</sup> Edward Green, *Local Libraries: Their Origin and Progress*, 79.

<sup>133</sup> J. Horsfall Turner, *Halifax Books and Authors*, 216.

<sup>134</sup> Edward Baines, *History, Directory and Gazetteer, of the County of York, Vol. 1 West Riding*, 189, 207.

<sup>135</sup> Thomas Smart, *The Prisoner: or Cruelty Unmasked*, 115.



Baines described him as a printer, dealer in music and musical instruments, having a medical and extensive circulating library and being a depository for the Religious Tract Society.<sup>136</sup> So Thomas Kemp had more than just a library of light literature; it was or included a medical library. Yet the business was not solely a library and with such a variety of activities, there is no means of assessing their relative importance and the size of the library and how much it was used. A law library was also established in Huddersfield in 1829.<sup>137</sup>

At a national level commercial circulating libraries were widespread. Christopher Skelton-Foord in his 1997 Ph.D. thesis on *Circulating Fiction 1780-1830. The Novel in British Circulating Libraries of the Romantic Era* selected the catalogues of 46 circulating libraries and analysed their contents. He used a broad interpretation of the term “circulating library” including some subscription libraries and even some mechanics' institute libraries. Most libraries in the sample were commercial circulating libraries showing a wide geographical dispersal including London, Bath, Salisbury, Wigan, Whitehaven, Darlington and Stamford.<sup>138</sup>

Edward Baines' *Directory* also provides evidence of commercial circulating libraries in other West Riding towns in 1822. He lists seven in Leeds, one in Bradford and five in Sheffield.<sup>139</sup> The second volume of the *Directory* is on the East

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<sup>136</sup> Edward Baines, *History, Directory and Gazetteer, of the County of York, Vol. 1 West Riding*, 189, 207.

<sup>137</sup> William White, *History, Gazetteer and Directory, of the West-Riding of Yorkshire [1837]*, Vol. 1, 365.

<sup>138</sup> Christopher J. Skelton-Foord, *Circulating Fiction 1780-1830. The Novel in British Circulating Libraries of the Romantic Era. With a Check-list of 200 Mainstream Novels of the Period*, Ph.D., University of Wales, Cardiff, 1997, 67.

<sup>139</sup> Edward Baines, *History, Directory and Gazetteer, of the County of York, Vol. 1 West Riding*, 117, 152, 389.



and North Ridings lists four circulating libraries in York and as many as seven in Hull.<sup>140</sup> So Halifax and Huddersfield were simply part of the regional and national trend.

### 3.7 NEWSROOMS

At least six newsrooms are known to have existed in Halifax before 1830. A reference is made to the late Talbot Newsroom of Halifax in the minutes of the Halifax Circulating Library, as 11 volumes had been presented in 1802.<sup>141</sup> Two newsrooms were advertised in the *Halifax Journal* in 1808: the Castle Newroom and the Shakespear[e] Newsroom.<sup>142</sup> Edward Baines' *Directory* also refers to three in Halifax: one "under the library", one at the Upper George Inn, Crown Street and one at the Admiral Nelson Inn, Cow Green.<sup>143</sup> The newsroom under the library may have been in connection with the subscription library. Some newsrooms may have been simply inns providing a supply of newspapers and magazines to attract customers. In Huddersfield a commercial newsroom was formed in 1829.<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> Edward Baines, *History, Directory and Gazetteer, of the County of York, Vol. 2 East and North Ridings*, Leeds, Edward Baines, 1823, 130, 335.

<sup>141</sup> Calderdale District Archives, MISC:49/3, Halifax Circulating Library, *Orders and Transactions 1797-1820*.

<sup>142</sup> Castle News-Room, *Halifax Journal*, 8(387), 1 October 1808, 3  
Shakespear[e] Newsroom, *Halifax Journal*, 8(393), 12 November 1808, 3.

<sup>143</sup> Edward Baines, *History, Directory and Gazetteer, of the County of York, Vol. 1 West Riding*, 187.

<sup>144</sup> William White, *History, Gazetteer, and Directory of the West-Riding of Yorkshire [1837]*, Vol. 1, 365.

## 3.8 LIBRARIES OF CHURCHES, CHAPELS AND RELIGIOUS ORGANISATIONS

### 3.8.1 Personal Collections and Book Clubs

The late eighteenth century marked, as we have seen, a shift from libraries attached to churches to secular book clubs and subscription libraries and later to newsrooms and circulating libraries.<sup>145</sup> Despite this change in emphasis, the work of existing libraries attached to churches continued and new ones were founded.

The Halifax Parish Church library and the library of St. James Church, Slaithwaite, are not documented for the period covered by this chapter. Perhaps they were little used for the Reverend Dr. George Legh, Vicar of Halifax 1731-75, cannot have bequeathed any of his books to the library, as an advertisement appeared in both the *Leeds Intelligence* and the *Leeds Mercury* 1776:

*This day is published A CATALOGUE OF BOOKS, in which are included, the entire library of the late Geo. Legh L.L.D. Vicar of Halifax...*<sup>146</sup>

Similarly, the Reverend John Murgatroyd who was schoolmaster and occasional minister at Slaithwaite did not leave his books to the church when he died in 1806. He left them to his niece Hannah Mellor in contrast to earlier practice when the Reverend Robert Meeke left some of his books to form a ministers' library in 1724.<sup>147</sup> Hannah Mellor did, however, give 30 books together with his manuscripts to the ministers' library in 1843.<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> See above 3.4, 3.5 and 3.7.

<sup>146</sup> [Advertisement], *Leeds Intelligence*, 23(1,178), 8 October 1776, 1.  
[Advertisement], *Leeds Mercury*, 10(508), 8 October 1776, 1.

<sup>147</sup> See above 2.2.3.

<sup>148</sup> Charles A. Hulbert, *Annals of the Church in Slaithwaite*, 235.



There were other forms of church library. As noted in the section on book clubs earlier in this chapter, the Reverend John Fawcett set up a book society at Waingate Baptist Church and a general book society along with the Reverend Dan Taylor of Heptonstall.<sup>149</sup> A library was formed for the congregation of Highfield Congregational Chapel, Huddersfield in 1806.<sup>150</sup>

There is, however, evidence of only a few church and chapel libraries at this time, but those without access to a church library with insufficient means to purchase their own books were sometimes able to borrow from the personal libraries of ministers. John Fawcett who appears in the self-education section in Chapter 1, was an apprentice for six years from the age of 13 in 1753, and he attended Bradford Church where the vicar was the Reverend Mr. Butler:

From this gentleman he received many marks of kindness, which he afterwards acknowledged with gratitude...He treated him with a great condescension, and encouraged him both by the loan of books and occasional instruction in classical learning, for which he was wellqualified, being headmaster of the Grammar School...<sup>151</sup>

Another acquaintance Mr. David Pratt assisted him in the study of Latin and "lent him many valuable books."<sup>152</sup>

At the time of the French Revolution the private libraries and book collections of dissenters were at risk from confiscation. Dr. Joseph Priestley, theologian, scientist and Minister at Mill Hill Unitarian Chapel, Leeds 1767-73, had

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<sup>149</sup> See above 3.4.

<sup>150</sup> Robert Bruce, *An Account of the Jubilee Services of Highfield Sunday School*, Huddersfield: Brook and Bastable, [1861], 24.

<sup>151</sup> See above 1.3.3.

John Fawcett, *An Account of the Life, Ministry, and Writings of the Late Rev. John Fawcett, D.D.*, 9.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid*, 11.



his meeting house burnt and his library destroyed in a riot in Birmingham in 1791 as he was sympathetic to the French Revolution. In the Huddersfield area during the same period, the Reverend Sylvanus Shaw, of Marsden Congregational Chapel 1798-1824, had his house searched by “a disorderly rabble” for treasonable documents, but all they found was a few books and many sermons.<sup>153</sup> Thus private libraries were not always immune from damage for religious and political reasons.

### 3.8.2 Northgate-End Unitarian Chapel Library, Halifax

A Northgate-End Book Society was started in connection with the Northgate-End Unitarian Chapel, Halifax in 1814. Reviews and books were ordered and circulated, and at the end of the year were sold by auction at one of the meetings. After a short cessation it was re-established in 1827 and was dissolved in 1862.<sup>154</sup> However, a library was formed for the poor as early as 1775 on the initiative of John Ralph, Minister 1767-95. The original notice proposed:

to collect a small library of books calculated to promote religious knowledge, and principally such as illustrate the truths, and enforce the doctrines of Christianity in a plain, easy, intelligible manner. As it behoveth us *to try all things*, it is not intended to exclude the writers upon any doctrinal system, provided their books breathe the spirit of that religion they are designed to teach. But ye wrath of man worketh not ye righteousness of God.<sup>155</sup>

Mr. Ralph was to undertake the management of the library, which was to be kept in the vestry, and arrangements were to be made for poor people to borrow after the afternoon service. The notice continued:

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<sup>153</sup> James G. Miall, *Congregationalism in Yorkshire*, 162, 314.

<sup>154</sup> Notes on the History of Northgate-End Chapel, *Northgate-End Chapel Magazine*, 4, April 1886, 64.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid*, 63.

An account will be kept of the books and to whom they are lent.  
A Catalogue of the books shall be kept in the vestry that the Poor  
may fix on such book they choose to read.<sup>156</sup>

The purpose of the library was to promote religious knowledge among poor people. Books were donated and among the first books were Samuel Clark's *Sermons*, Bishop Tillotson's *Sermons*, the works of Bishop Bull and the works of Matthew Henry, Richard Baxter and other Puritan divines.<sup>157</sup> Thus by 1775 the poor were considered sufficiently literate to read sermons and religious works. The influence of past ministers may have contributed to the literary tradition of Northgate-End Chapel as Oliver Heywood preached the first sermon at the chapel when it opened in 1696 and, as described in Chapter 2, lent books from his own library to his followers.<sup>158</sup> The first minister of the chapel was the Reverend Nathaniel Priestley, the son of Jonathan Priestley, who corresponded with Ralph Thoresby, as noted in Chapter 2 in the section on writing, book ownership, bookselling and printing.<sup>159</sup>

In sum, therefore there is fragmented evidence of book clubs and libraries associated with churches. They were not only for the middle classes, as a library was formed at Northgate-End Unitarian Chapel specifically for the poor.

### 3.8.3 Sunday School Libraries

Working class children had little access to books other than through Sunday school libraries, which were particularly important in the West Riding of Yorkshire, where

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<sup>156</sup> Notes on the History of Northgate-End Chapel, 63.

<sup>157</sup> F.E. Millson, *A Bicentenary Memorial - Two Hundred Years of the Northgate-End Chapel, Halifax*, Halifax: 1896, 32-3.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid, 11.

See above 2.3.1.

<sup>159</sup> See above 2.1.

as pointed out in the education background section in Chapter 1, attendance at Sunday schools was higher than the national average.<sup>160</sup> The Sunday school library made its appearance in the early years of the nineteenth century. Literature was being written for Sunday school pupils in large quantities by the 1820s and libraries began to be formed. These libraries served a large number of children providing them with educational texts and surviving evidence suggests that Sunday schools, particularly in Halifax, made a considerable contribution to the growth of literacy in the West Riding of Yorkshire and nationally. Moreover, they were accessible to more children than grammar school libraries, as the number attending Sunday schools was far higher. The Sunday School Union distributed literature to Sunday schools throughout England, not only publications of its own, but other works considered suitable. It had its own library and encouraged the setting up of local libraries and produced a booklet *Rules for the Library* in a *Book of Hints on the Establishment and Regulation of Sunday Schools*.<sup>161</sup> The annual report of 1824 included a catalogue of publications for sale. In the previous year 578,685 items had been distributed.

Spelling Books and Lessons	250,569
Prayers	4,323
Hymn Books	48,346
Catechisms	126,912
Tracts and Sermons	27,394
School Requisites	71,332
Reward Books and Magazines	49,809
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>578,685<sup>162</sup></b>

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<sup>160</sup> See above 1.3.4.

<sup>161</sup> Sunday School Union, *Annual Report 1824*, Catalogue 2, 4.

<sup>162</sup> Sunday School Union, *Annual Report 1824*, 8.



By far the largest category consisted of spelling books and lessons. As many children did not attend day schools because they were working, Sunday schools were often the only means of obtaining basic education, so this material was vital. The provision of as many as 250,569 spelling books and lessons further emphasises the basic educational function of Sunday schools. As early as 1824 the Sunday school prize had made its appearance. The 1824 report lists over 150 books as appropriate for reward books. The Union concerned itself not only with the reading of Sunday school scholars, but also with the teachers, listing books suitable for both scholars and teachers. The local Halifax Sunday School Union was in contact with the national society and reported in 1824:

Your Committee have sold during the past year, about twelve to fifteen pounds worth of Catechisms, Spellings and small Reward Books - also about ten pound worth of Bibles and Testaments. Your committee have had this year, a grant of one thousand Spelling and Reading books in Parts, value £4 15s from the Sunday School Union Society in London.<sup>163</sup>

This provides clear evidence of the use of books in Halifax Sunday schools as early as 1824. According to Methodist and other nonconformist records dating from the early years of the nineteenth century, not only were books in use in Sunday schools, but by the 1820s libraries were being formed or refounded. One example of the early use of books in a Sunday school library was at Park Methodist Church, Brighouse, Halifax parish. In 1824 a library was formed, but there had been an earlier one:

That the Juvenile Library be again brought forward for the use of the School free from restrictions that the forfeits collected in the School

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<sup>163</sup> Sunday School Union, *Annual Report 1824*, 56.

be appropriated to the use of the Library, and that the Sunday School Teachers' Magazine and Youths' Instructor to be taken in monthly.<sup>164</sup>

Similarly, at Rooley Lane Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, Sowerby, Halifax parish, there is evidence of the use of books as early as 1807. The school had in hand 40 New Testaments, 72 spelling books, 94 battle doors [sic] and 200 little books. There was a school library by 1822. Scholars of the Bible and New Testament classes could borrow a book for two weeks on payment of a halfpenny and the teachers had the same privilege. In 1824 use of the library was free provided that the readers did not damage the books or keep them beyond time.<sup>165</sup> The Todmorden Wesleyan Chapel, York Street Sunday School had a teachers' library in 1821.<sup>166</sup>

Huddersfield is not well documented in the years before 1830. However, when the Highfield Congregational Sunday School was opened in 1811 a library was instituted, but the selection was poor and small: the greater part comprised tracts and pamphlets bound together in small volumes.<sup>167</sup> In 1824 the Huddersfield Sunday School Union had a depository and received books from the national union, as it reported:

Please to accept our thanks to your liberality in furnishing our depository with so good a supply of books.<sup>168</sup>

Sunday school libraries and their later history are considered in greater detail in Chapter 6.<sup>169</sup>

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<sup>164</sup> Calderdale District Archives, PA:56, Park Methodist Chapel, Brighouse, *Sunday School Minute Book 1819-49*.

<sup>165</sup> *A Short Account of Sowerby Methodism*, Ripponden: Broadbent, 1906.

<sup>166</sup> Calderdale District Archives, TM:29(3), Todmorden York Street Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, *Teachers and Committee Meetings Minute Book 1820-8*.

<sup>167</sup> Robert Bruce, *An Account of the Jubilee Services of Highfield Sunday School*, 24.

<sup>168</sup> Sunday School Union, *Annual Report 1824*, 57.

<sup>169</sup> See below 6.6.5.

### 3.8.4 Society of Friends' Libraries

The early history of Friends' libraries was covered in Chapter 2.<sup>170</sup> Progress in building up libraries was not confined to the Brighthouse Monthly Meeting. Revived interest was shown in the Friends' library in London when Morris Birkbeck and Joseph Gurney Bevan were appointed to procure works for the library, particularly, modern works. Morris Birkbeck (1734-1817) was a great collector of Friends' books and left many books to the library in London and to the library of the York Meeting.<sup>171</sup> The Leeds Friends' Old Library was deposited in the Brotherton Library at Leeds University in 1976. This collection dates from the early eighteenth century and comprises 500 volumes including 1,000 separate items published between 1651 and 1850.<sup>172</sup>

Libraries or book collections were also being built up further afield. The Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England in its inventories of nonconformist chapels and meeting houses provide some evidence of Friends' books and libraries, for example, Friends Meeting House, Saltergate, Derbyshire had:

...a small library dating from the early years of the meeting.<sup>173</sup>

and the Friends' Meeting House, Thomas Street, Gloucester:

...a small library of early 18th-century Quaker books.<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>170</sup> See above 2.3.2.

<sup>171</sup> Anna L. Littleboy, Devonshire House Reference Library with Notes on Early Printers and Printing in the Society of Friends, 71-2.

<sup>172</sup> Leeds University Libraries, *Leeds Friends' Old Library. An Alphabetical Checklist*, 1978, 1-2.

<sup>173</sup> Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England, *An Inventory of Nonconformist Chapels and Meeting-Houses in Central England*, London: HMSO, 1986, 39.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid*, 80.



Literature was distributed through the Brighthouse Monthly Meeting and purchased at York, but with the establishment of local booksellers, approved booksellers stocked Quaker literature. So in March 1778:

This meeting being informed that William Edwards of Halifax and John Brook of Huddersfield are willing to accept of a Number of Friends' Books to dispose of...its agreed that their Names be given in at the Quarterly Meeting.<sup>175</sup>

Not all was steady progress, for in 1812 the books of the Brighthouse Monthly Meeting, a selection of which had existed since the early years of the eighteenth century, were in such a bad state that the library was disbanded:

The printed books, belonging to the Monthly Meeting being now in bad condition as to binding, and having laid a number of years nearly useless, the friends of Bradford, being about to establish a library, propose getting said books rebound and to remain their property to which this meeting agrees.<sup>176</sup>

Such was the fate of one of the earliest libraries in the Halifax area! The preparative meetings had built up their own libraries, which is perhaps why the monthly meeting books had not been recently read.

The 1820s saw a revived interest in building up and organising libraries. The term 'library' was more commonly used instead of 'books belonging to the meeting'. Interest was stimulated by a minute from the Yearly Meeting noted in October 1821 referring to previous minutes on the subject which, as well as interest in publications, demonstrates the centralised nature of the society. It reads:

This meeting recommends that Quarterly Meetings would direct the attention of the Monthly Meetings to the minutes of the Yearly Meetings of 1682, 1695 and 1759 on the subject of Friends

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<sup>175</sup> Brotherton Library, Leeds University, Q7, Society of Friends, Brighthouse Monthly Meeting, *Minute Book 1778-86*, 2.

<sup>176</sup> Brotherton Library, Leeds University, R3, Society of Friends, Brighthouse Monthly Meeting, *Minute Book 1810-22*, 79.

Books...As it is believed that in divers places where Particular Meetings are in possession of a collection of books, attention has been made focusing a Catalogue of them, as directed by the last of these minutes, and as it is of great importance that members of our Society and others should be invited by a perusal of the valuable writings to which this Meeting is adverting, it is desired that Monthly Meetings would request their Particular Meetings to revise their catalogues once in the year, and produce them to the Monthly Meeting, and at the same time to consider what additions may be suitably made, as well as the best means of giving publicity to the collection and ready access to all who may wish to peruse the books.<sup>177</sup>

This prompted preparative meetings to update their libraries. At the Brighthouse Monthly Meeting of March 1823 a committee was set up to revise the lists of books in the preparative meetings. It reported in May that the catalogues had been revised, but suggested that additions should be made for some meetings and there should be more publicity, especially to those not in membership.<sup>178</sup>

The libraries were enlarged by grants and subscriptions, but even after receiving a parcel of books from the Meeting of Sufferings, the Halifax Meeting reported in January 1824:

...the library of this meeting is still very small and applications for Books are numerous and increasing...<sup>179</sup>

A further committee was set up in November 1828, which reported in January 1829 after examining lists of books belonging to the preparative meetings and some were found to be very deficient, proposed some improvements. The suggested improvements were to raise a subscription equal to one month's collection for the

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<sup>177</sup> Brotherton Library, Leeds University, R3, Society of Friends, Brighthouse Monthly Meeting, *Minute Book 1810-22*, 482.

<sup>178</sup> Brotherton Library, Leeds University, R4, Society of Friends, Brighthouse Monthly Meeting, *Minute Book 1823-7*, 14, 22.

<sup>179</sup> Brotherton Library, Leeds University, EE20, Society of Friends, Halifax Preparative Meeting, *Minute Book 1822-36*, 21.



use of the poor be made to augment the libraries, appointment of librarians, production of printed catalogues and location of notices about the library in conspicuous places. The Brighthouse Monthly Meeting agreed to have a subscription for the monthly and preparative meeting libraries.<sup>180</sup> The Halifax Preparative Meeting, for example, was presented with 23 books by the Monthly Meeting in June 1829. In July of that year it was reported that a bookcase had been provided and fixed in the Women's Meeting House (men and women still had separate meetings) and the books had been deposited there.<sup>181</sup>

### 3.9 CONCLUSION

From the mid-eighteenth century with industrialisation, the advance of the middle class and rise in population, the number of booksellers and libraries increased to serve the growing number of educated people. The period 1750-1830 saw the formation of book clubs and subscription libraries often with a 'no politics, no religion' rule. Such clubs and societies existed alongside church and chapel libraries. In practice, however, there was not always a clear-cut division between the religious and the secular. Ministers of religion were often members of book clubs and played a prominent part in their management.

Book clubs were not simply small-scale libraries: they were social clubs. Educated people living in rural areas such as Luddenden and Holmfirth could meet to discuss books and topics of common interest. Membership of subscription

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<sup>180</sup> Brotherton Library, Leeds University, R5, Society of Friends, Brighthouse Monthly Meeting, *Minute Book 1827-31*, 120, 136-7.

<sup>181</sup> Brotherton Library, Leeds University, EE20, Society of Friends, Halifax Preparative Meeting, *Minute Book 1822-36*, 121-2.



libraries in the larger towns of Halifax and Huddersfield was confined to the professional and wealthier classes and, as Anne Lister's diary shows, visits to the library were part of 'the social round'. Yet not all book reading was social. Reading, as detailed in diaries, can be perceived as an isolated and personal activity. The buying of books and the building up of private libraries was an expression of individual taste rather than the acquiescence in the collective purchase decisions of a society or library. Reading was a means of self-education and self-improvement. In the case of Caroline Walker, it could be used as a substitute for society.

Secular libraries had a mainly male membership. Few women were members. Women were more likely to have access to church libraries: the library of Halifax Parish Church was open to all parishioners, but other church and chapel libraries were restricted to members of a particular church or denomination. The Society of Friends was relatively well supplied with books, which were available to both men and women. Girls as well as boys were able to use Sunday school libraries.

By the nineteenth century libraries were attached to churches and chapels and classics and religious books were used in schools, but in addition secular libraries had been formed with a wide range of subjects. History, travel and fiction were popular in subscription libraries and there was beginning to be a shift of emphasis towards reading for entertainment rather than for education. In the early nineteenth century libraries had begun to appear, both locally and nationally, which were to appeal to a far wider readership: the commercial circulating library, the newsroom with its newspapers and magazines and the Sunday school library.

## CHAPTER 4

# ECONOMIC, RELIGIOUS AND EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND FROM 1830 TO THE COMING OF THE PUBLIC LIBRARIES

### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

We don't now live in the days of Barons, thank God - we live in the days of Leeds, of Bradford, of Halifax, and of Huddersfield...<sup>1</sup>

The 1832 Reform Act symbolised the transition from an agricultural to an industrial society. Up to this time Parliament was dominated by the landed interest and by the south and west of England. Northern industrial towns like Halifax and Huddersfield did not have separate representation in Parliament, but neither did even larger towns like Leeds and Manchester. As a result of the 1832 Act, seats were redistributed and both Halifax and Huddersfield became parliamentary boroughs: Halifax with two Members of Parliament and Huddersfield with one. The Act extended the franchise to include more middle class voters and there were further Acts of Parliament in 1867 and 1884, which widened it further, but universal suffrage had still not arrived and most men and all women did not have the right to vote.

The Parliamentary Borough of Halifax comprised Halifax township and parts of Northowram and Southowram townships. Halifax became incorporated as a municipal borough electing a town council in 1848. In contrast, the Parliamentary

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<sup>1</sup> Yorkshire Election, *Leeds Mercury*, 63(3,212), 31 July 1830, 3.

Borough of Huddersfield consisted of only Huddersfield township. Huddersfield was not incorporated as a municipal borough until 1868. The municipal borough was more extensive than the parliamentary borough. The County Councils Act of 1888 set up county councils responsible for the administration of local districts other than boroughs. In 1893 Brighouse became a borough in its own right, as did Todmorden in 1896.

In 1837 came a further division into Poor Law Unions, which also became registration districts for the census. The Halifax Union or District comprised 18 townships including Hartshead and Clifton in Dewsbury parish. The remaining townships: Erringden, Heptonstall, Langfield, Stansfield and Wadsworth, together with the Lancashire township of Todmorden cum Walsden in Rochdale parish comprised Todmorden Registration District. The parishes of Almondbury, Huddersfield, Kirkburton and Kirkheaton formed the Huddersfield Union together with part of Cumberworth Half, which was in Emley parish and Cumberworth, which was divided between High Hoyland and Silkstone parishes.

In 1881 there was a further division into urban and rural sanitary districts. The Halifax Sanitary District covered Halifax township and parts of the Northowram, Ovenden, Skircoat and Southowram townships. Huddersfield Sanitary District comprised Huddersfield township itself and the townships of Almondbury, Dalton, Lindley, Lockwood and Longwood.



The new local government boundaries marked a change in the nature of local government from church to state: from ecclesiastical to civil. The parliamentary and municipal boroughs did not cover as extensive an area as that included in this study. Even the parishes themselves had been sub-divided into ecclesiastical districts from the 1840s. There is a tendency therefore for official statistics to be concentrated on the towns of Halifax and Huddersfield, which were similar industrial towns and had more in common with each other than they had with their rural surroundings.

As early as 1832 William Cobbett in his *Rural Rides* described a journey in the north in September:

This country, from Todmorden to Leeds, is however, covered over with population, and the two towns of Halifax and Bradford are exceedingly populous.<sup>2</sup>

Despite the increase in population, however, even in 1835 the Parliamentary Borough of Halifax, was largely rural, as is shown in Figure 4/I a map taken from John Crabtree's history of Halifax.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, Figure 4/II is a map of the Parliamentary Borough of Huddersfield dated 1833, the town itself covers only the southeast corner: the remainder of the borough is a series of hamlets with farmlands and woods.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> William Cobbett, *Rural Rides*, London: A. Cobbett, 1853; Reprint, London: J.M. Dent, [1912], Vol. 2, 277.

<sup>3</sup> John Crabtree, *A Concise History of the Parish and Vicarage of Halifax, in the County of York*.

<sup>4</sup> Vivienne Hemingway, *Parliamentary Politics in Huddersfield c.1832-53, Huddersfield. A Most Handsome Town*, ed. E.A. Hilary Haigh, 483.

**FIGURE 4/I HALIFAX PARLIAMENTARY BOROUGH 1836**

John Crabtree, *A Concise History of the Parish and Vicarage of Halifax, in the County of York*, Halifax: Hartley and Walker; London: Simpkin and Marshall, 1836.

Image removed due to third party copyright

*Halifax—Printed & Published by Hartley & Walker.*



**FIGURE 4/II HUDDERSFIELD PARLIAMENTARY BOROUGH 1833**

Vivienne Hemingway, Parliamentary Politics in Huddersfield, c.1832-53, *Huddersfield. A Most Handsome Town*, ed. E.A. Hilary Haigh, Huddersfield: Kirklees Cultural Services. 1992, 483.

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## 4.2 ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

### 4.2.1 Demography

**FIGURE 4/III POPULATION STATISTICS 1831-91 - ENGLAND, WEST RIDING OF YORKSHIRE AND SOME WEST RIDING PARISHES.**

Census of England and Wales 1891, *Preliminary Report and Tables, 1890-91*, c.6422, XCIV, xiii.

*The Victoria History of the County of York, Volume 3*, ed. William Page, London: Constable, 1913, 525-6, 533-4, 548.

	1831	1851	1871	1891	% Change 1831-91
England	13,090,523	16,921,888	21,495,131	27,482,104	109.95
Yorkshire, West Riding	957,458	1,315,885	1,821,340	2,429,632	153.76
Halifax parish	109,899	140,257	173,313	210,697	91.72
Almondbury parish	31,248	42,316	46,991	57,817	85.03
Huddersfield parish	30,399	45,618	57,816	73,109	140.50
Kirkburton parish	14,551	19,887	18,243	17,920	23.15
Kirkheaton parish	10,020	11,972	12,687	14,744	47.14
Bradford parish	76,986	149,543	207,149	275,211	257.48
Leeds Borough	123,393	172,023	258,817	367,059	197.47
Wakefield parish	24,538	33,117	43,493	56,244	129.21

Marsden is included in Almondbury parish

Kirkburton parish excludes Cumberworth Half

**FIGURE 4/IV POPULATION STATISTICS 1831-91 - HALIFAX PARISH.**

*The Victoria History of the County of York, Volume 3*, ed. William Page, London: Constable, 1913, 533-4.

*The Victoria History of the County of Lancashire, Volume 2*, ed. William Farrer and J. Brownbill, London: Constable, 1908, 345.

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**FIGURE 4/V POPULATION STATISTICS 1831-91 - ALMONDBURY PARISH**

*The Victoria History of the County of York, Volume 3*, ed. William Page, London: Constable, 1913, 525.

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**FIGURE 4/VI POPULATION STATISTICS 1831-91 - HUDDERSFIELD PARISH**

*The Victoria History of the County of York, Volume*, ed. William Page, London: Constable, 1913, 525.

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**FIGURE 4/VII POPULATION STATISTICS 1831-91 - KIRKBURTON PARISH**

*The Victoria History of the County of York, Volume 3*, ed. William Page, London: Constable. 1913, 525-6.

Image removed due to third party copyright

**FIGURE 4/VIII POPULATION STATISTICS 1831-91 - KIRKHEATON PARISH**

*The Victoria History of the County of York, Volume 3*, ed., William Page, London: Constable, 1913, 526.

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As Figure 4/III demonstrates the population of England more than doubled between 1831 and 1891. During the same period the population of the West Riding of Yorkshire rose by 153.76%, far higher than that for the country as a whole. The

population of Halifax parish grew at a lower rate at 91.72%, which was below the national average, although Huddersfield parish had a higher rate at 140.50%. Bradford parish and Leeds borough had a much higher rate of increase. Figures 4/IV, 4/V, 4/VI, 4/VII and 4/VIII for the Halifax and Huddersfield areas illustrate the wide variations between areas between 1831 and 1891, not only between parishes, but also between townships.

The movement of settlements from the uplands to the valleys set in progress by the Industrial Revolution continued. In the textile industry, steam power gradually replaced water power. In the upland areas, coal, which powered the steam, was difficult to obtain. In the Ryburn and Cragg valleys of the Upper Calder Valley, for example, which were not directly affected by canal or railway development, the decline of water-powered undertakings was not compensated for by steam-powered undertakings. In these areas and in the Holme Valley in the Huddersfield area, the peak of industrial development had been reached by the middle of the nineteenth century.<sup>5</sup>

#### **4.2.2 Transport**

Economic development was hindered in Halifax by the relatively late arrival of the railway. This was partly due to the terrain of the Pennines and particularly the position of Halifax in a steep sided valley. The rugged terrain, which had earlier

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<sup>5</sup> M.T. Wild, *The Yorkshire Wool Textile Industry, The Wool Textile Industry in Great Britain*, ed. J. Geraint Jenkins, 214, 221.

been advantageous to water power and the development of the textile industry proved a drawback to the development of good communications. The route of the Leeds and Manchester railway was via Normanton and by-passed Halifax and Huddersfield. In 1842 the line reached Sowerby Bridge, three miles to the west of Halifax. In 1844 a branch line was made from North Dean, Greetland to Shaw Syke, near Halifax, but it was not until 1855 that there was a permanent station following the opening of the Leeds-Bradford Junction Railway. The railway came to Huddersfield earlier, but there were delays due to the conflicting interests of the railway companies. In 1844 a branch of the Leeds Manchester Railway reached Cooper Bridge, three miles north east of Huddersfield. The railway reached Huddersfield and the station was opened in 1847.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> David Joy, *A Regional History of the Railways of Great Britain Volume 8 South and West Yorkshire, (the Industrial West Riding)*, Newton Abbott, David St. John Thomas, 2nd rev. ed., 1984, 128-39.



**FIGURE 4/IX TRANS-PENNINE RAILWAYS. TWENTIETH  
CENTURY**

Keith Parry, *Trans-Pennine Heritage, Hills, People and Transport*, Newton Abbott:  
David and Charles, 1981, 102.

Image removed due to third party copyright

Halifax lost the economic pre-eminence it had enjoyed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries partly due to the late coming of the railway. It was overtaken in the worsted industry by Bradford and by the woollen industry in Huddersfield, yet both Halifax and Huddersfield were flourishing industrial towns in the nineteenth century.

### **4.2.3 Social Conditions in the Towns**

The town of Halifax expanded, but in the central area many people lived in crowded areas, particularly in the older, lower part of the town. More houses were built to accommodate them, causing high density of housing with courtyards and narrow streets. By the 1840s observers were commenting not so much on the topography or on the architecture of the public buildings and larger houses of Halifax, but on social conditions: the state of housing and lack of proper drainage and sanitation. T.J. Maslen, who wrote about several industrial towns including Leeds, Halifax, Manchester and Liverpool, was concerned with the lack of town planning. He acknowledged the wealth of Halifax, but wrote in 1844:

There is not at present a more opulent town than Halifax, for its size and population; nor a town more capable of receiving improvement, or that more wants it. A number of little pitiful new streets have sprung up within these few years, in different quarters of the town, in the most irregular situations, and in some respects annoying to the inhabitants themselves by their having blocked up some thoroughfares and short cuts to different places.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> T.J. Maslen, *Suggestions for the Improvement of our Towns and Houses*, London: Smith and Elder, 1843, 115.

If the population of the township of Halifax had tripled in the first half of the nineteenth century, the population of Huddersfield had increased fourfold. Much of the town was part of the Ramsden Estate under Sir John Ramsden (1755-1839) and his successors. Wide main streets, well paved or tarmacked were made. In 1845 Friedrich Engels described Huddersfield as:

the handsomest by far of all the factory towns of Yorkshire and Lancashire, by reason of its charming situation and modern architecture...<sup>8</sup>

But he continued by reporting on a meeting to survey the town in 1844:

It is notorious that in Huddersfield whole streets and many lanes and courts are neither paved nor supplied with sewers nor other drains; but in them refuse, débris, and filth of every sort lies accumulating, festers and rots, and that, nearly everywhere, stagnant water accumulates in pools, in consequence of which the adjoining dwellings must inevitably be bad and filthy, so that in such places diseases arise and threaten the health of the whole town.<sup>9</sup>

These conditions were to some extent ameliorated in the second half of the nineteenth century with measures such as improved water supply and there was much rebuilding.

#### **4.2.4 Occupations**

The census of 1851 gives information not only on population numbers and distribution, but also details the numbers engaged in every occupation.

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<sup>8</sup> Friedrich Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, 1845; Reprint, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1987, 82.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, 82.



**FIGURE 4/X OCCUPATIONAL STATISTICS 1851 - MEN AND WOMEN  
AGED 20 AND OVER.TODMORDEN, HALIFAX AND  
HUDDERSFIELD REGISTRATION DISTRICTS**

Census of Great Britain 1851, *Population Tables Pt. II, Ages and Occupations, 1852-53, c.1691-II, LXXXVIII, Vol. II, 702, 705, 708, 711, 714, 717.*

Men aged 20 or over					
TODMORDEN		HALIFAX		HUDDERSFIELD	
1. 834	(10.83%)	1. 2,483	(8.01%)	1. 2,846	(8.91%)
2. 4,065	(52.80%)	2. 15,044	(48.49%)	2. 17,826	(55.78%)
3. 28	(0.37%)	3. 205	(0.66%)	3. 120	(0.37%)
5. 2,772	(36.00%)	5. 13,291	(42.84%)	5. 11,169	(34.94%)
TOTAL	7,699	TOTAL	31,023	TOTAL	31,961
Women aged 20 and over					
TODMORDEN		HALIFAX		HUDDERSFIELD	
1. 516	(6.27%)	1. 1,606	(4.98%)	1. 1,500	(4.83%)
2. 3,143	(38.19%)	2. 9,499	(29.47%)	2. 7,679	(24.70%)
3. 333	(4.05%)	3. 1,648	(5.11%)	3. 1,794	(5.77%)
4. 3,526	(42.85%)	4. 15,638	(48.51%)	4. 16,306	(52.46%)
5. 711	(8.64%)	5. 3,847	(11.93%)	5. 3,806	(12.24%)
TOTAL	8,229	TOTAL	32,238	TOTAL	31,085

- 1 IX(1) Agriculture
- 2 VI(3), XII(6 and 7), XIII(12) Textiles and others providing dress
- 3 VI(2) Domestic service
- 4 V(1 and 2) Wives and widows of no specified occupation
- 5 Other

Figure 4/X includes some broad categories extracted from the census. By the mid-nineteenth century the economy had become industrialised, but there was still a significant minority of both men and women employed in agriculture. Although the economies of Halifax and Huddersfield were similar, there were variations within textiles. There were more men working in cotton manufacture in the Halifax District, than in the Huddersfield District and the numbers were particularly high in

the Todmorden District in the areas bordering Lancashire. Many women worked in the home and were described as wives and widows of no specified occupation. This amounted to about half. A substantial minority were in domestic service.

**FIGURE 4/XI OCCUPATION STATISTICS 1851 - SOME PROFESSIONAL OCCUPATIONS IN TODMORDEN, HALIFAX AND HUDDERSFIELD REGISTRATION DISTRICTS**

Census of Great Britain 1851, *Population Tables Pt II, Ages and Occupations, 1852-53*, c.1691-II, LXXXVIII Vol. II, 702, 711

Men aged 20 and over			
	TODMORDEN	HALIFAX	HUDDERSFIELD
Clergymen, ministers and priests.	26	82	91
Solicitors and other lawyers	8	45	40
Physicians, surgeons and other medical men	13	59	63
Teachers	31	139	145
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>325</b>	<b>339</b>
% of Population	1.013%	1.048%	1.06%
Women aged 20 and over			
	TODMORDEN	HALIFAX	HUDDERSFIELD
Teachers	47	235	240
% of Population	0.57%	0.73%	0.77%

The number of professional people was low. The number of female teachers outnumbered male teachers, but teaching was the only profession open to women at that time. They were obviously, therefore, less likely than men to read medical and legal books, which were necessary to qualify for and practise these professions, or be members of special law and medical libraries. The presence of clergymen, solicitors and medical men in Halifax and Huddersfield is ample proof that some

men had an education far beyond the ability to read and write. Literacy would also have been a requirement for some commercial appointments and for some publishers and booksellers, but was not essential for most jobs. It was even less necessary for women, over half of whom were working at home or in domestic service.

#### **4.2.5 Akroyds, Crossleys and Fieldens**

In the third quarter of the nineteenth century Halifax was associated with two leading manufacturing families: the Akroyds and the Crossleys. Their rise symbolises the triumph of industry over agriculture and the social mobility created by the Industrial Revolution. Although both enterprises were well established by the middle of the century, they had small beginnings. Edward Akroyd became a partner in his father's firm in 1823. It was a large worsted firm, which specialised in damasks and other fancy fabrics. In 1842 it employed 2,000 workers. The Crossley carpet firm was also a family business: John (1812-79), Joseph (1813-68) and Francis Crossley (1817-72) developed their father's firm, which passed into their hands on the death of John Crossley the elder, a former carpet weaver, in 1837. At this time there were 300 workers, but by 1860 the number had risen to 3,500 and they were the largest employers in Halifax.

Many manufacturers were also philanthropists providing housing and churches for their workers. In the textile belt of the West Riding of Yorkshire the outstanding example is Titus Salt, who built Saltaire, Bradford. As employers, both Akroyds and Crossleys built houses for their workers, provided social and



educational facilities and were benefactors on a wider level. Edward Akroyd developed housing around the site of his new mill at Copley, south west of Halifax from the late 1840s. A lending library was started in 1850 and a branch of the Yorkshire Penny Bank in 1862. There was also a school and a co-operative store. In the early 1860s at the main site at Haley Hill, north of Halifax, the model housing development Akroyden was constructed at his instigation. Haley Hill Working Men's College was opened and other education ventures such as a literary and scientific society and a working men's club were provided. He was responsible for the building of All Souls Church at Haley Hill. The Crossleys were nonconformists and were also benefactors. Francis Crossley donated the money to build Square Congregational Church and People's Park. John Crossley developed the West Hill Housing Estate. Edward Akroyd and John and Francis Crossley were prominent in politics. Edward Akroyd was Member of Parliament for Huddersfield 1857-9 and Halifax 1865-74. Francis and John Crossley were both Members of Parliament for Halifax: Francis 1857-9 and John 1874-7<sup>10</sup>

The history of Todmorden in the nineteenth century is inseparable from the history of the Fielden family. Joshua Fielden (1748-1811) set up as a cotton manufacturer in 1782; the firm flourished and his son John Fielden (1784-1849) was

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<sup>10</sup> Rowland Bretton, Colonel Edward Akroyd, *Transactions of the Halifax Antiquarian Society*, 1948, 61-100.  
J.A. Jowitt, Copley, Akroyden and West Hill Park: Moral Reform and Social Improvement, Halifax, *Model Industrial Communities in Mid-Nineteenth Century Yorkshire*, ed. J.A. Jowitt, Bradford: Bradford University Press, 1986, 73-88.

Member of Parliament for Oldham (1832-47) and was partly responsible for the 1847 Factory Act known as the Ten Hours Act. Their relatively humble beginnings and later political activity gave them much in common with the Akroyds and Crossleys. The next generation of Fieldens, Samuel (1816-89), John (1822-93) and Joshua (1827-88) shared the cost of a new building for Todmorden Unitarian Church opened in 1869.<sup>11</sup>

### 4.3 RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND

More church buildings were required to keep pace of the increase and distribution of population. The Anglican Church responded to this need by changing its administrative divisions, and by building new churches. Halifax and Huddersfield became part of the newly created Ripon Diocese in 1836. In 1875 an abortive attempt was made to make Halifax the centre of a new diocese, but it was not until 1888 that the industrial West Riding had its own diocese centred on Wakefield.<sup>12</sup> Halifax parish was further divided after a series of Acts of Parliament dating from 1843. 28 new churches were built 1830-90, some of which had their own parishes.<sup>13</sup> Edward Baines in his report of the social, educational and religious state of the manufacturing districts in 1843 collected statistics on church and chapel accommodation. Figure 4/XII shows that there were far more churches and sittings

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<sup>11</sup> Brian R. Law, *Fieldens of Todmorden. A Nineteenth Century Business Dynasty*, Littleborough: Kelsall, 1995.

<sup>12</sup> John A. Hargreaves, *Halifax*, 155.

<sup>13</sup> A. Goodwin, How the Ancient Parish of Halifax was Divided, *Transactions of the Halifax Antiquarian Society*, 1961, 28, 34-5.

in non-Anglican than Anglican churches in the Halifax and Huddersfield areas. The churches of other denominations were nonconformist, with the exception of a small minority of Roman Catholics. These statistics reveal the number of churches in the Halifax and Huddersfield parishes and the predominance of nonconformity, but they measured only church accommodation, not attendance.

**FIGURE 4/XII SITTINGS IN CHURCHES AND CHAPELS 1843 – HALIFAX AND HUDDERSFIELD**

Edward Baines, *The Social, Educational and Religious State of the Manufacturing Districts*, London: Simpkin and Marshall, T.W. Ward, Leeds: Baines and Newsome, 2nd ed., 1843, Table I.

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The pattern of religious worship and church attendance is indicated in the 1851 Religious Census, which was an official census carried out at the same time as the decennial population census. Records of attendance were made on 'Census Sunday' 30 March 1851.

Little more than 60% of the population of 17,927,609 attended church on 'Census Sunday' in 1851, but Horace Mann, who was responsible for the census, adjusted the figure of 10,896,066 to 7,261,032 as many people attended more than once. If those unable to attend due to age, illness or employment were excluded, it was estimated that 5,288,294 did not attend.<sup>14</sup> Church attendance may seem high, but to contemporaries the findings were unexpected, not only because of the apparent low number attending church, but also because it emphasised the prevalence of nonconformity.

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<sup>14</sup> Census of Great Britain 1851, *Religious Worship (England and Wales), Report and Tables, 1852-53*, c.1690, LXXXIX.I, ccxxxii.

**FIGURE 4/XIII RELIGIOUS CENSUS 1851 - WEST RIDING OF YORKSHIRE**

Census of Great Britain 1851, *Religious Worship (England and Wales), Report and Tables, 1852-53*, c.1690, LXXXIX.I, ccxxxii.

Protestant Churches	Attendance
Church of England	239,795
Presbyterian	887
Independent	76,619
Baptist	45,415
Society of Friends	3,526
Unitarian	4,170
Moravian	2,779
Methodist	296,114
Other	8,570
Other Churches	Attendance
Roman Catholic	20,268
Other	2,583
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>700,726</b>

Church of England	34.22%
Nonconformist	62.52%
Other Churches	3.26%
Population	1,325,495
Attendance	700,726
Attendance Rate	52.86%

Figure 4/XIII shows attendance at churches of different denominations in the West Riding of Yorkshire on 'Census Sunday' 1851. There was an attendance rate of 52.86% (this is without the adjustment, which Horace Mann made to the national figure). It confirms the national finding on the importance of nonconformity. The Methodist churches were by far the largest group and the numbers present at the Methodist churches alone were higher than the number attending Anglican churches.

The Halifax and Huddersfield areas were divided into three registration districts:  
Halifax, Todmorden and Huddersfield.

**FIGURE 4/XIV RELIGIOUS CENSUS 1851- HALIFAX REGISTRATION DISTRICT**

Census of Great Britain 1851, *Religious Worship (England and Wales), Report and Tables, 1852-53*, c.1690, LXXXIX.I, 101.

Protestant Churches	Attendance
Church of England	20,854
Independent	12,104
Baptist	3,568
Society of Friends	150
Unitarian	629
Methodist	24,982
Undefined	318
Other Churches	Attendance
Roman Catholic	788
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>63,393</b>

Church of England	32.90%
Nonconformist	65.86%
Other	1.24%
Methodist	39.41%
Population	120,958
Attendance	63,393
Attendance Rate	52.41%

Figure 4/XIV shows that church attendance in the Halifax Registration District was similar to the West Riding as a whole, but with a slightly higher number of nonconformists. 40.41% of the attendance was in Methodist churches, although these were sub-divided into Wesleyan Methodist, Methodist New Connexion, Primitive Methodist and Wesleyan Reform.



**FIGURE 4/XV RELIGIOUS CENSUS 1851 - TODMORDEN  
REGISTRATION DISTRICT**

Census of Great Britain 1851, *Religious Worship (England and Wales), Report and Tables, 1852-53*, c.1690, LXXXIX.I, 101.

Protestant Churches	Attendance
Church of England	3,268
Independent	1,407
Baptist	5,886
Society of Friends	14
Unitarian	250
Methodist	8,229
Undefined	600
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>19, 654</b>

Church of England	16.63%
Nonconformist	83.37%
Baptist	29.95%
Methodist	41.87%
Population	29,727
Attendance	19,654
Attendance Rate	66.11%

In the Todmorden Registration District the nonconformist number was five times that of the Church of England. The attendance at one of the seven Anglican churches was omitted, which may offer a partial explanation for the relatively low Anglican Church number. There were 13 Baptist churches in the District and Baptist worshippers amounted to as many as 29.95%. The Todmorden Registration District, particularly Hebden Bridge, had a notable Baptist history and background.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> See above 1.2.2.

**FIGURE 4/XVI RELIGIOUS CENSUS 1851 - HUDDERSFIELD  
REGISTRATION DISTRICT**

Census of Great Britain 1851, *Religious Worship (England and Wales),  
Report and Tables, 1852-53*, c.1690, LXXXIX.I, 101.

Protestant Churches	Attendance
Church of England	26,473
Presbyterian	202
Independent	7,351
Baptist	6,223
Society of Friends	172
Unitarian	210
Methodist	24,452
New Church	522
Undefined	350
Other Churches	Attendance
Roman Catholic	700
Latter Day Saints	150
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>66,805</b>

Church of England	39.63%
Nonconformist	59.10%
Other	1.27%
Methodist	36.60%
Population	123,860
Attendance	66,805
Attendance Rate	53.93%

The Huddersfield Registration District had a much higher attendance for the Church of England than the Halifax and Todmorden Registration Districts and it was much higher than the average for the West Riding as a whole, however, there were still more nonconformists than Anglicans. All three districts had more nonconformist than Anglican churchgoers and all had a high Methodist attendance. Although a certain proportion of the population did not attend church on 'Census Sunday', there

was still a total attendance of 149,852 at churches and chapels in the Halifax, Todmorden and Huddersfield Registration Districts on this day. Even allowing for multiple attendances, this is a high figure.

The church was central to the lives of most people. It was not simply a matter of church going; it played an important part in their social and educational lives. It provided a means of education through day and Sunday schools. At the beginning of this period most church activities were linked to religion, as might be expected, for example, the Methodist Church had class meetings, love-feasts and prayer meetings.<sup>16</sup>

The range of religious activity is exemplified in the life of William Henry Billington 1837-58. After his early death at the age of 20, his diaries were published. He was a Sunday school teacher at Buxton Road Methodist Church, Huddersfield and he records attending a love feast, prayer meetings and a Bible class. He wrote 27 March 1854:

We have held our annual Sunday-school meeting this evening. There has been a good attendance of teachers. I have been elected librarian, together with my friend William Norcliffe, and also one of the committee for the clothing-club.<sup>17</sup>

He was also interested in tracts, both reading and distributing them:

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<sup>16</sup> N.P. Goldhawk, *The Methodist People in the Early Victorian Age. Spirituality and Worship, A History of the Methodist Church in Great Britain, Volume 2*, ed. R.E. Davies and E.G. Rupp, London: Epworth, 1978, 140-2.

<sup>17</sup> William Henry Billington, *Early Promise; or, The Sunday-School Teacher Preparing for Usefulness on Earth, or for Glory in Heaven. Exhibited in the Journals of William Henry Billington*, ed. Daniel Walton, 2nd ed., Huddersfield: Hardy, [1859], 40.



18th March 1853, To-day I have begun to work in another portion of God's vineyard. I feel that I ought to be doing something else beyond teaching in the Sabbath-school, so I have begun to be a tract distributor.<sup>18</sup>

Other instances of religious commitment can be cited. The Houghton family of Huddersfield engaged in much religious work: Rowland Houghton (1768-1820), a founder of the Huddersfield Subscription Library, was described as:

...public-spirited, and liberal in sentiment and practice; welcoming to his pious clergymen and ministers of all denominations, especially those who came to establish or promote the Missionary, Bible, Tract and School societies.<sup>19</sup>

Similarly, his wife Mrs. Sarah Houghton (1767-1841) was involved in religious work:

It is difficult to say, whether the London Missionary, the Bible, Tract or Anti-Slavery Society shared most of her effective assistance... Her love for the Tract Society was very great. She read every new tract, and most of the smaller publications, in order to be able to select them judiciously, for loan or gift.<sup>20</sup>

From the mid-nineteenth century and chapel activities broadened. By 1860 many secular societies: literary and philosophical societies, mechanics' institutes and mutual improvement societies had been founded. Churches and chapels formed similar organisations. In Halifax parish mutual improvement societies were established in connection with churches and chapels. They were debating societies,

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<sup>18</sup> William Henry Billington, *Early Promise; or, The Sunday-School Teacher Preparing for Usefulness on Earth, or for Glory in Heaven*, 25.

<sup>19</sup> Houghton, *Family Memorials of the Late Mr. and Mrs. R. Houghton of Huddersfield, and Several of their Children*, London: Privately printed, 1846, 24.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, 59-60.

which fostered discussion on mainly secular topics. Churches and chapels therefore became involved in activities, which were not strictly speaking religious or even not religious at all: mutual improvement societies, church institutes, literary associations and even savings banks and cricket. Thus they were adapting to an increasingly literate and secular society.

## **4.4 EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND**

### **4.4.1 Day Schools**

As noted in the educational background in Chapter 1, not all children attended school, but in the nineteenth century the number of children attending increased in both relative and absolute terms.<sup>21</sup> In 1818 the ratio of children attending day schools to the total population nationally was estimated by Brougham to be 1:17, by Kerry in 1833 to be 1:11 and by Mann's Census in 1851 to be 1:8. These estimates, although unreliable, nevertheless indicated a national trend.<sup>22</sup> The proportion of children attending day schools would be higher than these figures suggest, as they are taken as a proportion of the population as a whole, not one specific group. The contributions made by religious organisations was acknowledged when in 1833 the government granted £20,000 to the Anglican National Society and the British and Foreign Schools Society, which was to continue annually. State involvement

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<sup>21</sup> See above 1.3.1 and 1.3.4.

<sup>22</sup> John Lawson and Harold Silver, *A Social History of Education in England*, London: Methuen, 1973, 277.

increased throughout the nineteenth century. However, it was not until 1870 that compulsory education was brought about by the Elementary Education Act.

The returns of the *Education Enquiry* of 1833 provide evidence of an impressive number and variety of schools in the Halifax and Huddersfield parishes. In Halifax the National School had 50 boys and 110 girls and the Huddersfield National School had 235 boys and 145 girls.<sup>23</sup> The general trend, however, was for smaller schools and for more boys than girls to be educated in day schools with sewing classes often provided for girls. Some schools were fee-paying and would therefore exclude some children. In his report on the social, educational and religious state of the manufacturing districts of Yorkshire, Lancashire and Cheshire published in 1843, Edward Baines estimated that one tenth of the total population were attending day schools.<sup>24</sup> Yet elementary education was by no means universal and many children would receive no education at all. His 1843 report, while stressing the relatively small number of dame schools and factory schools, nevertheless conceded that:

many of the Dame Schools and the Factory Schools are of a very inferior class, and give an education of little value.<sup>25</sup>

Government inspections were carried out in some schools. An inspection of some schools in Yorkshire was carried out 1851-2 by the Reverend G.R. Moncrieff, Her

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<sup>23</sup> House of Commons, *Abstract of Answers and Returns on the State of Education in England and Wales, 1833, 1835*, HCP(62), Vol. III, XLIII, 1164, 1170.

<sup>24</sup> Edward Baines, *The Social, Educational, and Religious State of the Manufacturing Districts*, London: Simpkin and Marshall, T. Ward; Leeds: Baines and Newsome, 2nd ed., 1843, 28.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid*, 26.



Majesty's Assistant Inspector of Schools. The schools were examined with regard to methods, instruction and discipline and also provision of desks, furniture, books and apparatus, which were not always judged adequate. The report highlights the difficulties encountered, for example, in Upper Slaithwaite at a mixed school in Huddersfield parish where the master was:

well qualified on the whole for his situation. He has many disadvantages to contend with in the rude population among whom he has to labour; yet I think the standard of instruction should be raised.<sup>26</sup>

In a girls' school in Sowerby Bridge, Halifax parish:

The chief object of this school is to teach needlework to the factory girls, which is said to be well done.<sup>27</sup>

Not all children attended school and the effectiveness of some schools has been called into question, but the period of attendance may only have been for a few years as they left early to take up employment. In 1852 the Reverend F. Watkins, Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools, wrote in a review of Yorkshire schools:

Is there, for instance, a general complaint of the stolid ignorance and almost unreasoning existence of our agricultural population? - how can it be otherwise when the boy is taken from school before he can read with ease, and the girl can work her sampler?<sup>28</sup>

This view is borne out by the Reverend G.R. Moncrieff in his inspection of Halifax Parish Church School where the singing was very good and the teacher "thoroughly

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<sup>26</sup> Committee of the Council on Education, *Reports by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools, 1851-2, 1852*, Vol. II, c.1480, XL.I, 183.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, Vol. II, 182.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, Vol. II, 118.

in earnest", the organisation was good, but the instruction and discipline were only fair and:

The children generally remain so short a time in the school as to make it difficult to produce a good first class. The same remarks apply to the girls' school.<sup>29</sup>

According to the Education Census in 1851 there were several reasons why children received insufficient schooling. Most children had to work in order to contribute to the family income and to ensure they were not a drain on the meagre resources of working parents, yet the census considered that the main cause was the indifference of parents:

...but perhaps it principally stems from an idea, prevalent amongst the labouring classes, that instruction beyond a certain point can never be of any practical utility to those of their condition...the nobility, the gentry, merchants, tradesmen, artisans and agricultural labourers expect to see their children occupying just the same position as themselves, and not unnaturally seek to qualify them for no higher duties.<sup>30</sup>

Day schools varied greatly in standard and curriculum. They were not always effective, but increased state involvement in education in the form of inspections, would highlight any shortcomings and impose some uniformity of standards.

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<sup>29</sup> Committee of the Council on Education, *Reports by Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools, 1851-52*, Vol. II, 180-1.

<sup>30</sup> Census of Great Britain 1851, *Education, Report and Tables, 1852-53*, c.1692, XC.I, xxxix.

#### 4.4.2 Sunday Schools

As we have seen in the education background section in Chapter 1, attendance at Sunday school was particularly high in the West Riding of Yorkshire.<sup>31</sup> Children who were unable to attend day schools could attend Sunday schools, although many children were pupils of both. A few schools were day and Sunday schools combined. In Halifax parish in 1833 the number of Sunday school pupils was 20,076 as opposed to 6,602 day pupils, and in the four Huddersfield parishes there were 13,055 Sunday school pupils with 5,595 attending day schools.

Sunday schools had their anniversaries and Whit Monday field days with numerous attending, but nothing could equal the 'Halifax Sings' held at the Piece Hall, Halifax where thousands of Sunday school scholars met to sing hymns. The first one was in 1831 to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the Sunday school movement. 3,339 teachers and 10,827 scholars were present. They were held every five years; by 1856 there was an attendance of 20,323 scholars and 4,464 teachers.<sup>32</sup>

These large gatherings must certainly have made an impact on the town and they testified to the success of Sunday schools. Thousands of children were educated at Sunday schools, but in reality like day schools, they were not always effective. Edward Baines in his 1843 report estimated the number of Sunday school scholars who in his words were "read in the scriptures" or able to read the scriptures. In the

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<sup>31</sup> See above 1.3.4.

<sup>32</sup> E.A. Buckroyd, The Halifax Sunday School Union Jubilee Sings, 1831-1890, *Transactions of the Halifax Antiquarian Society*, New Series 7, 1999, 86, 88, 94.



'manufacturing district' of Yorkshire 84,569 of a total of 159,528 Sunday school scholars (53.01%) were able to read to the level of reading the Bible 14,265 of 28,346 scholars (50.32%) or a little over a half in Halifax parish were able to read the scriptures. The figures were better for the Huddersfield area, with 7,221 of 12,946 (55.77%) at this level.<sup>33</sup>

They were not always well run. Like day schools, high attendance did not always mean effective teaching. John Sykes, reminiscing about Slaithwaite in the 1860s, commented on the lack of teachers:

Suitable and intelligent Christian teachers were scarce. For the general staff of Sunday schools teachers in those days the authorities had to put up with such as they could get...<sup>34</sup>

and with regard to discipline:

Bangs on the head with a Bible occurring at certain parts of the hour seemed to be some teachers' way of enforcing or illustrating a lesson, not infrequently leading to a free fight between the teacher and the taught.<sup>35</sup>

With the increase of day schools, Sunday schools concentrated less on secular education and more on religious education. By 1869, for example, religious teaching is emphasised in the rules of the Queen Street Wesleyan Methodist Sunday school in Huddersfield, which stated:

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<sup>33</sup> Edward Baines, *The Social, Educational, and Religious State of the Manufacturing Districts*, Table 2.

<sup>34</sup> John Sykes, *Slawit in the 'Sixties*, Huddersfield and London: Schofield and Sims, 1926, 51.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid*, 51.

No writing, arithmetic or any merely secular knowledge shall be taught in this school on the Lord's day.<sup>36</sup>

#### 4.4.3 Literacy and Self-education

##### FIGURE 4/XVII ILLITERACY 1841-71 – ENGLAND AND WALES, WEST RIDING OF YORKSHIRE AND TODMORDEN, HALIFAX AND HUDDERSFIELD REGISTRATION DISTRICTS

W.B. Stephens, *Education, Literacy and Society 1830-70: the Geography of Diversity in Provincial England*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987, 322-3, 328.

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A 1987 study as illustrated in Figure 4/XVII concluded that in England and Wales 33% of men and 49% of women were illiterate in 1841 and as late as 1871 19% of men and 27% of women were illiterate. In Halifax, Huddersfield and Todmorden Registration Districts female illiteracy was higher than the national average. In 1856 in Todmorden as many as 75% of women were illiterate, which was almost double the national average of 40% and Halifax and Huddersfield were also well above the national average. This study highlights the shortness and ineffectiveness of much

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<sup>36</sup> Queen Street Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, Huddersfield, *Rules of the Queen Street Wesleyan Methodist Sunday School*, Huddersfield: Broadbent, 1869, 2.

education especially for girls where at least in day schools time was often spent on domestic training in the form of teaching sewing rather than elementary subjects. Literacy is defined in this study by the rather narrow criterion of the ability of brides and bridegrooms to sign the marriage register. The figure for those who were totally illiterate would be lower as some, possibly many people would be able to read, but not write, as is illustrated in the comment made by Ben Turner (1863-1914), a leading trade unionist, born in Holmfirth, of his father Jonathan:

My father was a very good reader, yet when he was twenty-one he couldn't read a line. He never went to school, he never could write more than his name, but he learnt to read, and read excellently, at the old village cobbler's shop, where they took in radical and other papers.<sup>37</sup>

There remained a high rate of illiteracy until the end of the nineteenth century, yet many people read a great deal. In a society where people often needed little education for their employment the working man (and it was the working man, rather than the working woman) read outside his employment. He read newspapers for information on national and local affairs or read simply for entertainment or as an escape from the monotony of work or poor living conditions.

There are many examples of self-help; one outstanding example was William Helliwell (1826-78), a cotton operative of Stansfield Township, Halifax Parish. J. Horsfall Turner described him as:

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<sup>37</sup> Ben Turner, *About Myself*, London: Cayme, 1930, 23.



...a teetotaler and vegetarian, rambling far and near to pick up a book at bookstalls, and searching catalogues of old books with avidity. The rudiments of education he got at a night school. At fifteen he took a strong liking for the study of languages, and by twenty had made great progress in Hebrew and Greek. For the next twenty years he worked during leisure hours at French, German, Chinese, Arabic, and several other languages, yet had no use for them and had no one in his country life to converse with in anything but the Yorkshire dialect...Philosophy, science and mathematics were also his favourite subjects.<sup>38</sup>

#### 4.4.4 Grammar Schools

Although most children received little more than a basic education, grammar schools where Latin and other languages were taught continued in existence, but numbers were small and not all pupils studied the more advanced subjects. The Taunton Enquiry reported on grammar schools in 1868-9 in the Halifax and Huddersfield areas. One example was Almondbury Grammar School, which had 39 students, but only a few were learning Latin, none were learning Greek and only three were learning French. For some subjects it was even in competition with local elementary schools:

In arithmetic, history, geography and English grammar, the work appears to be less finished and methodical than that of well-instructed boys of similar age in an ordinary elementary school.<sup>39</sup>

The school, however, was unusual in that chemistry was taught:

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<sup>38</sup> J. Horsfall Turner, *Halifax Books and Authors*, 218.

<sup>39</sup> Royal Commission to Inquire into Education in Schools in England and Wales, Vol. XVIII, *Special Reports (Yorkshire)*, 1867-8, c.3966-XVII, XXVIII, Pt. XV.I, 20.

Here is an important centre of the woollen manufacture, the knowledge of chemistry and of some of its practical applications to dyeing is especially valued. Several of the boys have passed with credit the examination in inorganic chemistry of the Department of Science and Art.<sup>40</sup>

#### 4.4.5 Adult Education

A small number of grammar school pupils went to university, but few people benefited from a university education. In the eighteenth century studies at Oxford and Cambridge universities were dominated by the classics, with some law, medicine and divinity. The students were mainly upper class, aristocratic and Anglican; nonconformists were not admitted. Women were also excluded. They were remote geographically from industrial and manufacturing areas, which were associated with nonconformity. In the nineteenth century higher education was extended with universities and entry broadened to include women and dissenters. University College London was opened in 1826, allowing admission to nonconformists. The Anglican King's College was founded in London in 1831. Another Anglican foundation, Durham University, dates from 1832. Bedford College, a college for women, was started in 1849. The first of the civic universities: Manchester University in the neighbouring county of Lancashire started as Owens College in 1851. The development of new universities had little impact in Halifax

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<sup>40</sup> Royal Commission to Inquire into Education in Schools in England and Wales, Vol. XVIII, *Special Reports (Yorkshire)*, 21.

and Huddersfield and few men in Halifax and Huddersfield had a university education. Most graduates were Anglican clergymen and grammar school teachers.

Nonconformist ministers had their own training colleges. Solicitors, surgeons and apothecaries were trained by apprenticeship and some physicians studied at Scottish universities. Financial enterprise and technical knowledge were prerequisites for success in an industrial society and the notable local manufacturers and benefactors of Halifax, Edward Akroyd and the Crossleys had not attended a university.

From the eighteenth century with the influence of the Enlightenment and despite a lack of formal scientific education, interest in science was expressed by the formation of middle class literary and philosophical societies. They had lectures on literary and scientific subjects and had their own libraries, but one of their chief functions was the formation of museums of geology, natural history and antiquities. The Halifax Literary and Philosophical Society was started in 1830. The Huddersfield Literary and Scientific Society was formed in 1857.

More children were receiving some form of education, but the mid and late nineteenth century also saw the development of education for adults. Mechanics' institutes with their aim to teach science to working men were prominent in adult education. After an unsuccessful attempt in 1825 the Halifax Mechanics' Institution was formed in 1830 and the Huddersfield Mechanics' Institution was formed in 1841. The Huddersfield Scientific and Mechanic Institute formed in 1825 and its successor, the Huddersfield Philosophical Society was in existence from the 1830s



and the Huddersfield Literary and Scientific Society started in 1857. Mechanics' institutes in Halifax and Huddersfield were well supported, and by the mid-nineteenth century some smaller towns also had them. After 1851 reports of the Yorkshire Union Mechanics' Institutes and reports in local newspapers show that the number of mechanics' institutes and mutual improvement societies together with working men's clubs, reading societies and news rooms multiplied. Small societies reflected local loyalties as each town and village found a medium of educational and cultural expression

Contemporaries regarded the Huddersfield Mechanics' Institution as one of the most successful in England and a model for others to follow. J.W. Hudson, secretary of Manchester Athenaeum, in his *History of Adult Education* of 1851 saw it as one of the examples of complete success.<sup>41</sup> Angus Bethune Reach in his writings about the Yorkshire textile districts in 1849 viewed Huddersfield as:

...the best conducted and most useful establishment of the kind I have seen in the north of England. In too many towns, the mechanics' institute really means a cheap news-room, with an occasional trashy concert for the subscribers. In Huddersfield the case is very different. The Mechanics' Institution there is a vigorously working and most effective educational establishment, supported not so much by occasional galas, and factitious and incidental contributions, as by the steady assistance of a large body of working men.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> J.W. Hudson, *The History of Adult Education*, London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1851, viii.

<sup>42</sup> Angus Bethune Reach, *The Yorkshire Textile Districts in 1849*, ed. C. Aspin, Blackburn: Blackburn Times Press, 1974, 6.

George Searle Phillips, secretary of Huddersfield Mechanics' Institution 1846-54, was agent and lecturer to the Yorkshire Union of Mechanics' Institutes and an author who is referred to below in Chapter 5 in the section on bookselling and printing and in the section on the Huddersfield Mechanics' Institution Library.<sup>43</sup> In 1855 he claimed in the report:

It is not too much to say, that in many cases they have changed, by their Class instruction, Libraries, Reading Rooms, Lectures, and by their moral and intellectual influence the entire face and character of the working population; and Huddersfield, Halifax, Wakefield, Marsden, Dogley Lane, and Netherton, may be instanced as places more or less illustrative of the truth of this proposition.<sup>44</sup>

There has been much discussion on whether mechanics' institutes achieved their aim of teaching science to working men. They could not teach working men until they had overcome the problem of illiteracy, so they became involved in elementary education and subjects other than science were taught. Not all members of mechanics' institutes were working class men; there were some middle class men and some women. However, at Huddersfield Mechanics' Institution most members were working men. This is illustrated in membership lists; for example, in according to the annual report of 1847 of 778 members most were skilled working men.<sup>45</sup> The mechanics' institution became a technical college in 1895, a polytechnic in 1970 and a university in 1992. J.W. Hudson listed mechanics' and literary institutions in

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<sup>43</sup> See below 5.1.3 and 5.7.3.

<sup>44</sup> Yorkshire Union of Mechanics' Institutes, *Annual Report 1855*, 21.

<sup>45</sup> Huddersfield University Archives, HMI/1/1, Huddersfield Mechanics' Institution, *General Committee Minutes 1843-4, Annual Reports 1847-8*.

England in 1851. He included a relatively high number in the area defined by this study: seven in the Halifax area and 20 in the Huddersfield area.<sup>46</sup>

The 1851 Education Census lists mechanics' institutes under literary and scientific institutions. More institutions are listed in Hudson's survey, although a few cited by Hudson are omitted from the census. Mechanics' institutes and other societies were not confined to large towns: Halifax and Huddersfield with respectively 575 and 810 members were not typical as many smaller towns and villages had their own societies, which had a much lower membership. There were as many as 28 literary and scientific institutions in the Huddersfield District, including 19 mechanics' institutes. Most had lectures and 26 of 28 had a library. In the Halifax District there were only 13 institutions, but notable among them was the Woodside Lending Library, which was open to those who worked for or were tenants of the Akroyd family. There was a membership of 800. Similarly, Copley Free Library had been established by the Akroyds, but no membership information is given. These two societies were libraries without lectures or classes and had a free membership. Most literary and scientific institutes only permitted men to be members or had only a few women members. Women were provided for at Woodside Lending Library, which had 350 men and 450 women members.<sup>47</sup> The Huddersfield Female Educational Institute, formed in 1847, was excluded from the

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<sup>46</sup> J.W. Hudson. *The History of Adult Education*, 232-4.

<sup>47</sup> Census of Great Britain 1851, *Education, Report and Tables*, 247-8.



Education Census. It had 118 members in 1858. Like its male counterpart the Huddersfield Mechanics' Institution, it had classes and a library.

In addition to the flourishing religious and educational activity in nineteenth century Halifax and Huddersfield, other societies notably in the field of music were formed. There were several music societies in Halifax. Handel's *Messiah* had its first Yorkshire performance in Halifax in 1766 and there was a music club as early as 1767. The more formal Halifax Harmonic Society was formed in 1792 and the Halifax Choral Society in 1817. Both the Akroyds and the Crossleys had musical societies in connection with their works: the Haley Hill Musical Society from 1855 and the Dean Clough Choral Society in the 1860s.<sup>48</sup> The famous Huddersfield Choral Society was founded in 1836.

In sum the number of mechanics' institutes and educational and other societies provide ample evidence of thriving social and cultural life, not only in the larger towns of Halifax and Huddersfield, but particularly from the mid-nineteenth century, also in smaller towns and villages. These widespread educational and cultural activities indicate a high degree of self-help and desire for self-improvement and at a time when many people worked in manual employment, provided outside interests and mental fulfilment.

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<sup>48</sup> Arthur Porritt, 18th and 19th Century Clubs and Societies in Halifax, *Transactions of the Halifax Antiquarian Society*, 1964, 85-90.

## CHAPTER 5

### SECULAR LIBRARIES FROM 1830 TO THE COMING OF THE PUBLIC LIBRARIES

#### 5.1 BOOKSELLING AND PRINTING

##### 5.1.1 Introduction

As noted in Chapter 3 there were several booksellers and printers well established in Halifax and Huddersfield by the early nineteenth century.<sup>1</sup> By 1866 there were numerous booksellers, printers and those engaged in associated trades in Halifax and Huddersfield demonstrating widespread ability to read and a market for books. The 1866 edition of White's *Directory* listed as many as 33 under the heading "Booksellers, Stationers, Printers, etc." in Halifax. In addition, 16 music dealers and two law stationers were listed. In Huddersfield the number of booksellers, binders, printers and stationers had increased to 25 along with 11 newsagents and 10 music and musical instrument sellers.<sup>2</sup> White's directories show the presence of booksellers and printers in Halifax and Huddersfield and the growth of their number followed a similar pattern to other West Riding towns. The picture was repeated nationally as shown, for example, in William Henry Hodson's *Booksellers, Publishers and Stationers Directory* published in 1855, which was the first national directory of the book trade to be printed since 1785. Intended as a reference tool for

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<sup>1</sup> See above 3.1.

<sup>2</sup> William White, *Directory of Leeds, Bradford, Huddersfield, Halifax, Wakefield, Dewsbury...and all the Parishes and Villages in and near those Populous Districts of the West Riding, Forming the Great Seats of the Woollen and Worsted Manufactures [1866]*, 11th ed., Sheffield: William White, 1866, 334, 343, 727, 736-7.

the trade, it lists booksellers, law stationers, music sellers, printers, papermakers and even some libraries. It covers Great Britain and has over 6,000 entries. The expansion of publishing, bookselling and associated trades is evident from the large number of entries. It is divided by counties for England and Wales, which are subdivided by town. There are separate sections for Scotland and Ireland.

Many of the entries were for London, but by this time the book trade had spread to all parts of the country. In the north entries for Manchester and Liverpool were numerous, 442 and 224 respectively. Although these numbers are only approximate, as some businesses appear in more than one section, their very number clearly demonstrates how well established the book trade was. In Yorkshire, Leeds had 135 entries on the book trade, York had 80, Bradford had 62 and Sheffield 91. Halifax with 35 and Huddersfield 47 had fewer, but they were smaller towns. By the mid-nineteenth century the book trade had spread to smaller towns: Todmorden had two entries, Sowerby Bridge had three entries and Holmfirth four.<sup>3</sup> Directories provide a record of the number of businesses, but give no indication of their size and most would have been small concerns. Census returns detailing the number of employees in bookselling, printing and related businesses reflect more accurately the extent of economic activities in these areas.

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<sup>3</sup> William Henry Hodson, *Hodsons's Booksellers, Publishers and Stationers Directory 1855* Reprint, Oxford: Oxford Bibliographical Society, 1972, 23-30, 56-65.



**FIGURE 5/1 PRINTING, BOOKSELLING AND ASSOCIATED TRADES IN SOME WEST RIDING OF YORKSHIRE BOROUGHES 1851**

Census of Great Britain 1851, *Population Tables Pt II, Ages and Occupations, 1852-53, c.1691-II, LXXXVIII, Vol. II, 721, 723-4.*

	<b>Halifax Borough</b>	<b>Huddersfield Town</b>	<b>Bradford Borough</b>	<b>Leeds Borough</b>	<b>Wakefield Borough</b>
<b>Men aged 20 and over</b>	8,993	8,115	27,032	45,246	5,827
Publisher, Bookseller	16	15	24	54	8
Bookbinder	24	14	38	50	9
Printer	47	59	47	188	29
Other	3	3	7	19	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>311</b>	<b>47</b>
	<b>1.00%</b>	<b>1.12%</b>	<b>0.43%</b>	<b>0.69%</b>	<b>0.81%</b>
<b>Women aged 20 and over</b>	9,894	8,412	29,413	49,569	6,198
Bookseller	4	1	6	19	-
Others	8	1	-	4	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>4</b>
	<b>0.12%</b>	<b>0.02%</b>	<b>0.02%</b>	<b>0.05%</b>	<b>0.06%</b>

According to Figure 5/I Halifax Borough and Huddersfield town had a higher percentage of men aged 20 and over working in printing, bookselling and associated trades than the percentage for Bradford Borough, Wakefield Borough and even Leeds Borough. Women were employed in bookselling and printing, perhaps in family businesses, but as they were few in number little can be concluded from these figures. Nevertheless, the percentages of men employed illustrate that the book trade was slightly more important in the economy of Halifax and Huddersfield than it was in neighbouring towns shown in the table.

### 5.1.2 Bookselling and Printing in Halifax

Many books with a Halifax imprint survive and the *British Library Catalogue of Printed Books* gives details of Halifax works. J. Horsfall Turner's *Halifax Books and Authors* gives a wealth of information on publications written in or associated with Halifax.<sup>4</sup> Additionally, other secondary articles on Halifax bibliography and booksellers have been written. These sources amply illustrate the extent of Halifax printing and scholarship.

What distinguished Halifax from other towns during this period was the success of William Milner (1803-50) who set up a business in 1836 in Swine Market. His first publications were printed by others, but from about 1839 the firm moved to Cheapside and he published his own works. After his death in 1850 his stepsons Francis and John Sowerby ran the undertaking.<sup>5</sup> Cheaper reprints and popular works were appearing and Milner typified this trend. Milner, together with other contemporary publishers enabled the working classes to buy affordable literature. He issued a vast output of printed works, not only the number of books published, but also the number of copies. Moreover, he did not distribute his publications through conventional channels. Although based in Halifax, he travelled throughout the country selling his works at markets and fairs. Interest in Milner stems from an article, which appeared in the *Bookman* in 1897 written by Herbert Wroot, a Bradford journalist. He had access to the firm's records, which were

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<sup>4</sup> J. Horsfall Turner, *Halifax Books and Authors*.

<sup>5</sup> Herbert E. Wroot, A Pioneer in Cheap Literature. William Milner of Halifax, *Bookman*, 11 (66), March 1897, 170-3.

Derek Bridge, William Milner: Printer and Bookseller, *Transactions of the Halifax Antiquarian Society*, 1969, 75-9.

destroyed on its liquidation in 1913. William Milner published cheap reprints and Wroot gives figures of sales. Milner published an edition of Burns' poems in 1837 and 100,000 copies had been issued by 1869. By the end of 1895 126,514 copies of Byron's works, 85,296 copies of the poems of Milton, and 63,092 copies of Longfellow's poems had been sold. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was particularly successful: 25,000 copies were sold in 15 months from September 1852. Sales had reached over 133,000 by the end of 1895.<sup>6</sup> These figures seem high even though they cover a long period of time and were not limited to Halifax and the local market.

There is, moreover, plenty of evidence for publications printed by Milner, later Milner and Sowerby, from extant copies and from the *British Library Catalogue of Printed Books*. The firm published not only reprints of classics, but also many popular novels and short stories such as: Richard M. Bird, *Nick of the Woods; or, Adventures of Prairie Life* in 1855.<sup>7</sup> Some books were written specifically for children, such as Arnaud Berquin, *The Children's Friend: consisting of Moral and Interesting Stories, for the Amusement and Instruction of Youth*, in 1858.<sup>8</sup>

Milner and Sowerby can be compared with the Edwards family who were active in bookselling and binding in Halifax and beyond in the later years of the eighteenth century and early nineteenth century as described in the section on bookselling in Halifax in Chapter 3.<sup>9</sup> Edwards sold valuable books to a small

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<sup>6</sup> Herbert E. Wroot, *A Pioneer in Cheap Literature. William Milner of Halifax*, 174.

<sup>7</sup> Richard M. Bird, *Nick of the Woods; or, Adventures of Prairie Life*, Halifax: Milner and Sowerby, 1855.

<sup>8</sup> Arnaud Berquin, *The Children's Friend: consisting of Moral and Interesting Stories, for the Amusement and Instruction of Youth*, Halifax: Milner and Sowerby, 1858.

<sup>9</sup> See above 3.1.1.



number of people with the means to buy them. Some of his books would have been purchased for their rarity and the quality of their bindings rather than for their content. In sharp contrast, Milner sold cheap books including many popular works and some reprints of classics. They were not unique or collectors' items, but thousands of copies were printed and sold to the public for both education and entertainment. Both Edwards and the Milner families were well known outside Halifax. The change from the later years of the eighteenth century to the middle and later years of the nineteenth century - from the exclusiveness of Edwards to the mass appeal of Milner and Sowerby - is symbolic of the spread of education and literacy.

Other booksellers and printers in Halifax also sold and published popular works, albeit on a much smaller scale. One such example is William Nicholson (c.1805-75). He was in business in Halifax from 1828 until he moved to Wakefield in 1871. He combined running his business with serving as a minister at Steep Lane Baptist Church, Sowerby from 1857 to 1862.<sup>10</sup> William Nicholson published popular literature, for example: John Bright, *The Book to Keep the Spirits up in Dull and Gloomy Hours* in 1868.<sup>11</sup> He published similar books to Milner and Sowerby and their production of the same book *Anna Lee, or The Maiden, the Wife and the Mother* by T.S. Arthur in separate editions in 1866 might illustrate their

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<sup>10</sup> Douglas Taylor, *The Nicholson Family: Printers and Publishers, Transactions of the Halifax Antiquarian Society*, 1977, 24.

<sup>11</sup> John Bright, *The Book to Keep the Spirits up in Dull and Gloomy Hours*, Halifax: W. Nicholson, 1868.

rivalry.<sup>12</sup> With his religious background, he was the author of several religious works including *The Bible Class Reader*, which he wrote and published in 1867.<sup>13</sup> One Halifax author of religious works was William Turner (1788-1853), Minister of Northgate End Unitarian Chapel, Halifax 1828-53. He had some of his sermons published, for example, in 1837 *Thoughts on Original Sin, being the Substance of Three Sermons Preached in the Presbyterian Chapel, Northgate End, Halifax*.<sup>14</sup> Not only was he an author, but he also played an active part in the Halifax Circulating Library, Halifax Literary and Philosophical Society and Halifax Mechanics' Institution.<sup>15</sup>

Further examples of publications illustrate the variety of works published and written. Not only were the working classes reading, but some were authors, for example: Samuel Hanson, a Cheesemonger, had *A Parcel of Original Poems by a Halifax Cheesemonger* published in 1885.<sup>16</sup> William Heaton (1805-71), a weaver, of Luddenden, and later of Halifax, was another local author. One of his collections of poems was *The Flowers of Calder Dale: Poems*, which appeared in 1847. He is considered in the next section on reading and private collections.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> T.S. Arthur, *Anna Lee, or The Maiden, the Wife and the Mother*, Halifax: W. Nicholson, 1866; Milner and Sowerby, 1866.

<sup>13</sup> William Nicholson, *The Bible Class Reader*, Halifax: W. Nicholson, 1867.

<sup>14</sup> William Turner, *Thoughts on Original Sin, being the Substance of Three Sermons Preached in the Presbyterian Chapel, Northgate End, Halifax*, London: Smallfield; Mardon; Manchester: Forrest and Fogg, 1837.

<sup>15</sup> See below, 5.4.1, 5.5.2 and 5.7.2.

<sup>16</sup> Samuel Hanson, Cheesemonger, *A Parcel of Original Poems by a Halifax Cheesemonger*, Halifax: A. Priestley, 1885.

<sup>17</sup> William Wheaton, *The Flowers of Calder Dale: Poems*, London: Longmont; Halifax: Leyland, 1847.

See below 5.2.



Four histories of Halifax had been published by the nineteenth century as described in earlier chapters.<sup>18</sup> Another history appeared in 1836 written by John Crabtree as *A Concise History of the Parish and Vicarage of Halifax, in the County of York*. The title is misleading, as it is a detailed 552-page book. By this time so much had been documented on Halifax history that it was more practicable to write about a special aspect of history rather than a general history. *A History of Wesleyan Methodism in Halifax* had been written as early as 1836 by J.U. Walker.<sup>19</sup>

Church and chapel histories appealed to a limited market; but there was sufficient support from their congregations to support publication. Histories of schools were more likely to be published in the twentieth century, but Thomas Cox, headmaster of the Heath Grammar School, which had been in existence since the later sixteenth century, wrote its history published in 1879.<sup>20</sup> Even political movements had their historians: Benjamin Wilson, a former Chartist, wrote his memoirs in *The Struggles of an Old Chartist* in 1887.<sup>21</sup>

National and local news was reported in newspapers. The *Halifax Express* was published 1830-41. The *Halifax Guardian* appeared from 1832 and The *Halifax Courier* from 1853.

The work of antiquarians is typified by J. Horsfall Turner in his book *Halifax Books and Authors* published at a later date in 1906 and his editing of the diaries of

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<sup>18</sup> See above 2.1 and 3.1.2.

<sup>19</sup> J.U. Walker, *A History of Wesleyan Methodism in Halifax*.

<sup>20</sup> Thomas Cox, *A Popular History of the Grammar School of Queen Elizabeth, at Heath, near Halifax*.

<sup>21</sup> Benjamin Wilson, *The Struggles of an Old Chartist*, Halifax: Nicholson, 1887.



Oliver Heywood and other works. Interest in antiquarian pursuits led to the foundation of the Halifax Antiquarian Society in 1900.

In summary these examples illustrate the extent and variety of works being published in Halifax during this period, from popular literature to religious works, books of historical and antiquarian interest and newspapers. Many publications were popular. Reprints of classics and fiction with books for children and religious compilations, which were not intended solely for the people of Halifax, but also for the national market. Yet some works published in Halifax were aimed at a local readership. Sermons and specialised historical and antiquarian works were of limited interest outside Halifax, but there was a sufficient local and national market to support a variety of publications.

### **5.1.3 Bookselling and Printing in Huddersfield**

There is little material on most booksellers other than through directories and imprints with the exception of Joshua Hobson (1810-76). He provides an example of the involvement of booksellers and printers in politics. He started, printed and edited the radical weekly the *Voice of the West Riding* in Huddersfield for 53 weeks June 1833-June 1834. He then removed to Leeds where he was printer and for a time editor of the Chartist newspaper, the *Northern Star* which was published in Leeds 1837-1845. He was editor of the Tory *Huddersfield Chronicle* 1855-71. His editorships provided him with a platform for his opinions. In November 1833, for example, in the *Voice of the West Riding*, he was probably the author of an article advocating a poor man's press and a library association:

....I propose the establishment, in every city and large town, of a library, with a Reading Room and Hall, for mutual instruction and

communication of knowledge, together with a POOR MAN'S PRESS, from which may be issued daily or weekly periodicals appropriated to the interests and enlightenment of the working class, and supported by themselves.<sup>22</sup>

Hobson therefore was well placed to carry on the political bookselling of his predecessor through bookselling and his editorships. He printed some of the writings of Richard Oastler (1789-1861), Tory land agent to the Thornhill Estate at Fixby, near Huddersfield and factory reformer. Oastler criticised nonconformist millowners and wrote several pamphlets. Some were in the form of letters to Edward Baines, for example, *Yorkshire Slavery, The "Devil-to-do" amongst the Dissenters in Huddersfield. A Letter Addressed to Edward Baines* in 1835.<sup>23</sup> In 1842 Hobson had acquired the printing, booksellers and circulating library owned by Christopher Tinker in Market Walk, Huddersfield as well as having a shop in Leeds.<sup>24</sup> Hobson's name also appears under "booksellers, binders, stationers and printers" in the 1842 and 1847 editions of White's *Directory*.<sup>25</sup>

Christopher Tinker sold political works and advertised several times in the *Voice of the West Riding*. An advertisement in the 7 September 1833 issue reads:

C. TINKER, Begs leave to inform his friends and the public in general, that the following cheap Political Publications, may be had at

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<sup>22</sup> Joshua Hobson, Of a Poor Man's Press and Library Association, *Voice of the West Riding*, 1(26), 30 November 1833, 207.

<sup>23</sup> Richard Oastler, *Yorkshire Slavery, The "Devil-to-do" amongst the Dissenters in Huddersfield. A Letter Addressed to Edward Baines Esq, M.P.*, Leeds: J. Hobson, 1835.

<sup>24</sup> Stanley Chadwick, 'A Bold and Faithful Journalist', *Joshua Hobson 1810-1876*, Huddersfield: Kirklees Libraries and Museum Service, 1976, 44.

John Halstead, *The Voice of the West Riding: Promoters and Supporters of a Provincial Unstamped Newspaper, 1833-4*, *On the Move: Essays in Labour and Transport History*, eds. Chris Wrigley and John Shepherd, London: Hambledon, 1991, 38.

<sup>25</sup> William White, *Directory and Topography of the Borough of Leeds, and the Whole of the Clothing District of the West Riding of Yorkshire* [1842], Sheffield: Leader. 1842, 226. William White, *Directory and Topography of Leeds, Bradford, Halifax, Huddersfield, Wakefield, and the Whole of the Clothing Districts of the West Riding of Yorkshire* [1847], Sheffield: Leader, 1847, 500.



his shop every Saturday morning, the *Voice of the West Riding*, Gauntlet, Destructive, Cosmopolite, and Poor Man's Guardian, and all other Political and Theological Works according to order - Has now on sale the following at very reduced prices, viz. Paine's Political Works in Cloth boards, 3s. Paine's Theological Works 3s. Volney's Survey of the Ruins of Empires in cloth boards, 3s. ... and many other works equally cheap.<sup>26</sup>

Although Joshua Hobson was a radical bookseller, he was not typical of booksellers and printers in Huddersfield. The *Voice of the West Riding* was not only an unstamped newspaper, but also an illegal one.

The first local newspaper exclusive to Huddersfield was the *Huddersfield Chronicle* in 1850. The *Huddersfield Examiner* followed in 1851. Most Huddersfield publications, however, were not political. Literary works published in Huddersfield include, for example, *Spring Flowers; being a Literary Miscellany, Published in Aid of the Sunday and Infant School, Huddersfield* in 1839. The Reverend J.C. Franks and his colleagues compiled this work of light literary pieces with a strong religious element, to raise money to establish a Sunday and infant school.<sup>27</sup> Another example published over 40 years around 1885, is entitled *Adventures of a Yorkshire Farmer and his Scapegrace Nevvy in London* by Timothy Goorkrodger.<sup>28</sup> It was a graphic account of 'adventures' among the lower classes in London, partly written in Yorkshire dialect, showing the variety of popular publications and the change in tastes over a period of time.

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<sup>26</sup> [Advertisement], *Voice of the West Riding*, 1(14), 7 September 1833, 112.

<sup>27</sup> J.C. Franks ed., *Spring Flowers; being a Literary Miscellany, Published in Aid of the Sunday and Infant School, Huddersfield*, Huddersfield: J. Brook, 1839.

<sup>28</sup> Timothy Goorkrodger, *Adventures of a Yorkshire Farmer and his Scapegrace Nevvy in London*, Huddersfield: Privately printed, [c.1885].



George Searle Phillips (1815-89) also wrote under the pen name January Searle and lived in Yorkshire from 1845 to the late 1850s. He has previously been referred to in Chapter 4 under adult education in the educational background section and is also referred to when the Huddersfield Mechanics' Institution Library is considered.<sup>29</sup> He was a writer of light literary works and biographical studies and a frequent contributor to periodicals.<sup>30</sup> He held the post of secretary of the Huddersfield Mechanics' Institution 1846-54 and was an early advocate of public libraries. Most of his books were written during the years he lived in Yorkshire. He wrote, for example, *The Life, Character and Genius of Ebenezer Elliot, the Corn Law Rhymers*, in 1852 and a book of more local interest: *Walks Round Huddersfield* in 1848.<sup>31</sup>

The first history of Huddersfield was *Huddersfield. Its History and Natural History* written by Charles P. Hobkirk and published in 1859.<sup>32</sup> Subsequently, substantial histories of neighbouring areas were written, for example, the Reverend Charles A. Hulbert, Perpetual Curate of St. James Church, Slaithwaite 1839-67 and Vicar of All Hallows, Almondbury 1867-88 was the author of several religious works. His local historical works included *Annals of the Church of Slaithwaite (near Huddersfield)*, *West-Riding of Yorkshire*, which was based on a course of lectures given to the people of Slaithwaite and was published in 1864.<sup>33</sup> Formation of

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<sup>29</sup> See above 4.4.5 and see below 5.7.3.

<sup>30</sup> Mabel Phythian (Tylecote), January Searle in Yorkshire, *Journal of Adult Education*, 1(1), September 1926, 146, 149.

<sup>31</sup> George Searle Phillips, *The Life, Character and Genius of Ebenezer Elliot. The Corn Law Rhymers*, London: Whitaker; Huddersfield: J. Brook, 1852.

George Searle Phillips, *Walks Round Huddersfield*, Huddersfield: Bond and Hardy, 1848.

<sup>32</sup> Charles P. Hobkirk, *Huddersfield. Its History and Natural History*.

<sup>33</sup> Charles A. Hulbert, *Annals of the Church in Slaithwaite*.

libraries in Slaithwaite owed much to Hulbert as described in the section on Slaithwaite libraries in Chapter 6.<sup>34</sup>

Examples of more popular books on religion were *Lectures by the Rev. John Hanson, to the Working Classes of Huddersfield Delivered on Sunday Afternoons, in the Theatre, Huddersfield* in 1858 and *Huddersfield Sunday School Centenary Memorial. A Brief Account of the Origin and Early History of Sunday Schools in the Borough of Huddersfield* by the Reverend Robert Bruce published in 1880.<sup>35</sup>

To sum up - books on a variety of books were being published in Huddersfield as illustrated by these few examples. Sales of the *Voice of the West Riding* show a strong political undercurrent with interest in such questions as factory reform and Chartism. 1850 and 1851 saw the beginning of two mainstream newspapers the *Huddersfield Chronicle* and the *Huddersfield Examiner* as further confirmation of concern with local and national events and issues. Literary, religious and historical works of both local and general interest were published.

## 5.2 READING AND PRIVATE COLLECTIONS

At a time when institutional libraries were few and often not extensive, many private libraries were built up by those with sufficient wealth to purchase them. Donations to libraries from individuals augmented or even comprised most of the collection. One notable example was the donations of William Priestley (1779-1860), an

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<sup>34</sup> See below 6.1.6.

<sup>35</sup> John Hanson, *Lectures by the Rev. John Hanson, to the Working Classes of Huddersfield Delivered on Sunday Afternoons in the Theatre, Huddersfield*, Huddersfield: J.E. Wheatley; London: Simpkin and Marshall, 1858.  
Robert Bruce, *Huddersfield Sunday School Centenary Memorial. A Brief Account of the Origin and Early History of Sunday Schools in the Borough of Huddersfield*, Huddersfield: J. Crossley, 1880.



amateur musician, antiquary and literary gentleman who lived for some time at Lightcliffe, near Halifax. He bequeathed books to both the Halifax Parish Church Library and the library of the Halifax Literary and Philosophical Society having been an early member. He left 350 volumes of printed books and 30 works of music to the Halifax Parish Church Library and £70 to the vicar for the erection of shelves.<sup>36</sup> Similarly, 138 volumes of etymological works including 109 titles and 10 manuscript volumes of Shakespeare were presented to the Literary and Philosophical Society from Priestley's library.<sup>37</sup> The number and the scholarly nature of the works made valuable contributions to two Halifax libraries. Both these libraries will be referred to in later sections.<sup>38</sup> Thus the bequest of one person could substantially alter the history and composition of the libraries which benefited.

One outstanding private collection from later this period was that of Sir Thomas Brooke (1830-1908) of Huddersfield. He was a manufacturer with literary and antiquarian interests and was associated with many societies including the Society of Antiquaries of London and the Early English Text Society. At a local level he was a founder member of the Huddersfield Archaeological and Topographical Association, later the Yorkshire Archaeological Society, and was its president from 1866 until his death.<sup>39</sup> He is referred to in the section on the history of this library.<sup>40</sup> He bequeathed many manuscripts including the Beckwith, Hunter,

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<sup>36</sup> J. Horsfall Turner, *Halifax Books and Authors*, 258.

Calderdale District Archives, Halifax Parish Church, HAS/B:22/14, *Catalogue of the Library and Related Correspondence 1862-83*.

<sup>37</sup> Halifax Literary and Philosophical Society, *Annual Report for 1860-1*, 3, 7-10.

<sup>38</sup> See below 5.5.2 and 6.1.1.

<sup>39</sup> Sir Thomas Brooke, Bart. F.S.A. [Obituary], *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*, 20, 1909, 105-6.

<sup>40</sup> See below 5.6.2.



Radcliffe, Thoresby and Woodhead papers and books relating to Yorkshire to the Yorkshire Archaeological Society, as well as manuscripts to the British Museum and the Society of Antiquaries of London.<sup>41</sup> The collection was large enough for a two-volume catalogue to be published in 1891. In the preface Sir Thomas wrote:

The books have nearly all been bought by myself since 1854, and I think that most of the large libraries which have been sold in late years have representatives on my shelves.<sup>42</sup>

Moreover, one hundred copies of this catalogue were printed for private circulation so that others could have access to the collection:

It has been the pleasure of my life to collect these books, and in sending out this catalogue *in usum amicorum* my hope is that others, may in some degree, share in that pleasure.<sup>43</sup>

Clearly Sir Thomas Brooke was an important Yorkshire bibliophile with the wealth to build up a substantial private collection.

Sale catalogues provide further evidence of personal libraries, for example, the books of Dr. Richard Cameron of Huddersfield were sold in 1874 after his death.

A sale catalogue described them as a:

valuable library of...about 2,600 volumes of books, embracing every variety of the English Literature; a valuable collection of Medical Works; Latin and Greek classics; and works in French, German, Italian and Spanish...<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Sir Thomas Brooke, Bart. F.S.A. [Obituary], 110.

Sir Thomas Brooke's Estate, *Huddersfield Chronicle*, 12,862, 17 October 1908, 8.

<sup>42</sup> Thomas Brooke, *A Catalogue of the Manuscripts and Printed Books Collected by Thomas Brooke, F.S.A.*, London: Ellis and Elvey, 1891, Vol. 1, Preface.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid, Preface.

<sup>44</sup> Robert Cameron, *Catalogue of the Valuable Library of the Late Robert Cameron, M.D.*, Huddersfield: B. Brown, 1874.

It may also have partly been a working collection because there were 371 medical volumes.<sup>45</sup>

Private libraries were sold for many reasons, not always because of the death of their collectors. They could be sold to raise money. Samuel Baines (c.1815-66), a Brighouse manufacturer, had to sell his library of over 4,000 books on science, history and other subjects due to financial difficulties.<sup>46</sup>

These few examples provide an illustration of the extent of private libraries and collections. Private collectors were educated, had the financial means to buy their own books and did not need to depend on the collective ownership of library books for their reading. Although they made use of society and educational libraries, they also donated books and were also significant benefactors. Moreover, through service on library committees they were often responsible for decisions made on book purchasing and the formulation of library rules. Thus the wealthy made a significant impact on library development in the nineteenth century.

A small number of people had sufficient wealth to possess hundreds or even thousands of books, but they were not typical of the population as a whole. Most people owned few books - in sharp contrast to these private libraries, John Sugden (b.1838) described working class homes in Slaithwaite:

The homes of many workers out at that time consisted of two beds in separate corners of the house...a chest of drawers, one corner cupboard, a cradle, some chairs...fender and fire irons, various pots,

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<sup>45</sup> Robert Cameron, *Catalogue of the Valuable Library of the Late Robert Cameron, M.D.*, 28-34.

<sup>46</sup> J. Horsfall Turner, *The History of Brighouse, Rastrick and Hipperholme*, 273.



some kettles, cans, and a washing tub; the never-failing Bible, a few tracts, less [sic] pictures; everything had to be done in one room as best they could.<sup>47</sup>

These living conditions were not conducive to book collecting and reading. There would be little space for storage of books or privacy for reading. Lighting by candles would be a further drawback.<sup>48</sup>

The memoirs of the Reverend John Eagleton (1785-1832), Minister of Ramsden Street Chapel, Huddersfield 1826-32, refer to the changes that had taken place in the early nineteenth century. They were written by his daughter, published in 1841 and describe his early years in Coventry:

Books were to him a source of the richest enjoyment, and no sacrifice of gratification was considered too great, if by its means he could make an addition to his own little library.<sup>49</sup>

In contrast describing a period over 40 years later, she continues:

How thankful would the subject of this memoir have been, to possess opportunities of a free access to books, such as are enjoyed by young people of the present day!<sup>50</sup>

Autobiographies and diaries provide evidence of book purchases and reading and this form of record has survived throughout Britain. A bibliography of working class autobiographies 1790-1900 reveals that in England extant published autobiographies are concentrated on London and northern industrial centres and

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<sup>47</sup> John Sugden, *Slaithwaite, Notes of the Past and Present*, 3rd rev. ed., Manchester and London: Heywood, 1905, 34.

<sup>48</sup> David Vincent, *Bread, Knowledge and Freedom. A Study of Nineteenth-century Working Class Autobiography*, London: Europa, 1981, 121-2.

<sup>49</sup> *Memoirs of the Rev. John Eagleton*, Huddersfield: Roebuck, 1841, 6.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid*, 6.



several examples from Halifax and Huddersfield are included.<sup>51</sup> Education and self-improvement are particularly associated with working men in industrial areas with a relatively high number of mechanics' institutes and Sunday schools, which may account for the findings. By the mid-nineteenth century the self-educated man was no longer exceptional nor need he study or attempt a course of reading in isolation, for he was able to associate with others with similar interests. Working men often made contact with other readers not necessarily through formal membership of societies.<sup>52</sup> A local example is William Heaton of Luddenden, near Halifax as noted in the previous section on bookselling and printing in Halifax.<sup>53</sup> He wrote about his reading when he was a young man in the early 1830s:

I again began my study in the school of nature; I collected insects, in company with a number of young men in the village. We formed a library, and bought a number of the best books we could find on the subject.<sup>54</sup>

If living conditions limited opportunities for reading, long working hours presented another difficulty. In pre-industrial society some workers might have exercised more control over the hours they worked. The factory system with its greater regulation made it more difficult to read at work.<sup>55</sup> William Heaton was able to make the most progress with his writing when he was weaving at home. In 1850 he took up employment at Crossley's carpets in Halifax. He wrote in 1857:

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<sup>51</sup> John Burnett et al ed., *The Autobiography of the Working Class: an Annotated Critical Bibliography, Volume 1, 1790-1900*, Brighton: Harvester, 1984, xviii.

<sup>52</sup> David Vincent, *Bread, Knowledge and Freedom*, 125-6.

<sup>53</sup> See above 5.1.2.

<sup>54</sup> William Heaton, *The Old Soldier; The Wandering Lover; and Other Poems; Together with a Sketch of the Author's Life*, Halifax: Birtwhistle, 1857. xviii-xix.

<sup>55</sup> David Vincent, *Bread, Knowledge and Freedom*, 131.

I must continue to work amidst the clatter of machinery. Although I have only one hour at noon, I generally occupy one half of it either in reading or writing...<sup>56</sup>

However, despite working in a factory, he was still able to spend some time in reading and writing. Thus those intent on self-improvement often succeeded despite unfavourable circumstances and regardless of conditions at home and work. Many people worked in small businesses or were self-employed. Peter Featherstone, Minister at the Queen Street Methodist Chapel, Huddersfield 1871-4, refers to Richard Haigh of Kirkburton in his autobiography. Haigh kept a grocers, chemist and druggists shop and:

If he found a quiet hour in the afternoon, without many customers, one of his daughters would read to him while he was working away at his business. He had one of the choicest private Libraries that I have seen.<sup>57</sup>

Much reading was of a political nature. By the mid-nineteenth century the ability to read had reached far beyond a few working men attempting to improve themselves, political movements fostered a desire among large numbers for reading the radical press. Working men taught and influenced each other, for example, John Hartley (1821-1903) of Hebden Bridge, was a Chartist who later became a supporter of co-operation. He was first employed in a silk mill in the Colden Valley where:

He was placed under Mr. Wm. Blackburn, who was an apostle of such men as Robert Owen. Blackburn took an interest in young Hartley, who was his piecer, conversing with him in matters affecting the working class and finding him such periodicals as the "New Moral World", a paper which was read by considerable numbers of

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<sup>56</sup> William Heaton, *The Old Soldier*, xxii-xxiii.

<sup>57</sup> Peter Featherstone, *Reminiscences of a Long Life*, London: Charles H. Kelly; Burslem: Joseph Dawson, 1905, 71.

thinking men at that day. Mr. Hartley began to subscribe to the "Northern Star" ...<sup>58</sup>

Political reading is referred to in the autobiography of Benjamin Wilson of Salterhebble, near Halifax, former Chartist, published in 1887. He wrote about political movements in Halifax. At the time of the Chartist movement around 1847 he states:

Amongst combers, handloom weavers, and others politics was the chief topic. *The Northern Star* was their principal paper, and it was common practice, particularly in villages, to meet at friends' houses to read the paper and talk over political matters.<sup>59</sup>

One Halifax diary of particular note is that of James Turner (c.1857-1909), which has unfortunately only survived from June 1881 to August 1882. Although the diary covers a relatively short period of time, it reveals his efforts at self-improvement through book buying, reading and attending chapel and Young Men's Christian Association meetings. At the same time, the diary records the problems he faced in his day to day life. He was married with children, his employment was irregular and he had financial problems and was often in debt. These adverse circumstances make his self-education even more remarkable. Examples of diary entries regarding books are:

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<sup>58</sup> Death of Mr John Hartley of Hebden-Bridge, *Todmorden and District News*, 1,776, 15 May 1903, 7.

<sup>59</sup> Benjamin Wilson, *The Struggles of an Old Chartist*, 206.



8. SEPTEMBER 1881...I have been a subscriber to Cassell's Popular Educator since November 1880, with a view to the advancement of my education, and which I am glad to say had done a great deal towards it. I also subscribe to a newspaper called People of the World. I intend to have them bound yearly, as they come out monthly.<sup>60</sup>

and

12. AUGUST 1882. I have bought Byron's Poetical Works and Scott's Poetical Works, for 2/9 the two. On the eighth I sold my Iliad and Odyssey [sic], for 1/6 the two. As I intended to buy larger copies of them.<sup>61</sup>

Ability to read was by no means universal, particularly among women. Even fewer women wrote. The editors of the bibliography of working class autobiographies 1790-1900, note that only a small number were written by women. The absence of female working class autobiographies for Halifax and Huddersfield followed the national trend.<sup>62</sup> Although James Turner was reading the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, his wife was apparently unable to read, until in June 1882 he wrote:

18. JUNE 1882...I commenced to learn my wife to read.<sup>63</sup>

To conclude: many working men were reading and collecting books at this time. The private library was not only the mark of the educated man, but also of the self-educated. Nevertheless, working men were often also members of such organisations as mechanics' institutes thereby having access to libraries. Formal education and libraries contributed much to literacy and working class culture, but

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<sup>60</sup> James Frederick Turner, *Hard up Husband. James Turner's Diary Halifax 1881-2*, Orwell:

<sup>61</sup> Ibid, 60.

<sup>62</sup> John Burnett et al ed., *The Autobiography of the Working Class: an Annotated Critical Bibliography, Volume 1, 1790-1900*, xviii.

<sup>63</sup> James Frederick Turner, *Hard up Husband, James Turner's Diary 1881-2*, 52.

self-education in the form of reading, book purchase and informal contact with the like-minded were also important factors.

There was a much lower rate of literacy among women of the working classes: the daughters of Richard Haigh were able to read to him in his shop, but James Turner had to teach his wife to read. Lower participation in secondary and adult education and their economic position contributed to their lower rate of educational attainment.

### 5.3 SCHOOL LIBRARIES

There is more evidence for school libraries in the nineteenth century than hitherto. The population was growing and a higher proportion of children attended school, so the number of schools and school attendance increased, which supplied a market for textbooks and increased the likelihood of the formation of libraries.

Two grammar schools: Rishworth School and Hipperholme Grammar School had libraries that had been formed earlier.<sup>64</sup> The *Taunton Enquiry*, which reported in 1868, included references to these two libraries. Rishworth School had a library open to all pupils and Hipperholme Grammar School had a library of 420 volumes, which was also open to all pupils.<sup>65</sup> In the Huddersfield area there was a library at Almondbury Grammar School:

In the year 1848 when part of the grammar school was rebuilt, the Nettleton Trustees contributed £200 to the building fund, and have since made frequent grants of small amounts to the school library...<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> See above 2.4 and 3.3.

<sup>65</sup> Royal Commission to Inquire into Education in Schools in England and Wales, Vol. XVIII, *Special Reports (Yorkshire)*, 135, 222.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid*, 20.

A specific question on libraries was asked by the enquiry and respondents reported libraries at Heath School Halifax and Holme School, Almondbury in addition to libraries at Rishworth School and Hipperholme Grammar School.<sup>67</sup> There are few references to libraries in secondary sources. One example is that according to the 1866 prospectus of Hipperholme Grammar School, the library comprised 400 books.<sup>68</sup> A library is sometimes mentioned in association with re-building work. When a school was rebuilt or extended library premises may also have been improved.

Huddersfield College, a proprietary school for classical and commercial education, had a library from its foundation in 1838. Its notice of opening stated:

Each Pupil will pay Half-a-Guinea on entering the College, towards a fund for procuring a Library and Philosophical Apparatus, for the permanent use of the Institution.<sup>69</sup>

An 1877 catalogue survives. It lists 594 volumes. The books are mainly on history, biography, travel and fiction including 22 of Walter Scott's novels and 18 works by Dickens. There were only 38 volumes on philosophy and science and 34 on natural history.<sup>70</sup> This predominance of fiction and more popular subjects suggests that there was a strong recreational element; it was not all strictly for educational purposes.

The Huddersfield and District Pupil Teachers' Library issued a catalogue in 1881.<sup>71</sup> It was managed by the Huddersfield and District Pupil Teachers' Library

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<sup>67</sup> Royal Commission to Inquire into Education in Schools in England and Wales, Vol. XVIII, *Special Reports (Yorkshire)*, 326, 336, 356.

<sup>68</sup> Peter Facer, *A History of Hipperholme Grammar School from 1660 to 1914*, M.A., London University, 1966, 195.

<sup>69</sup> Huddersfield College, *Notice of Opening*, 1838.

<sup>70</sup> Huddersfield College Library, [*Catalogue 1877*], Huddersfield: Crossley, 1877.

<sup>71</sup> Huddersfield and District Pupil Teachers' Library, *Catalogue [1881]*, Huddersfield: Cowgill, 1881.



Committee. It was not a library for school children, but for young people training to be teachers. Most teachers in elementary schools were trained under the pupil teacher scheme where they served an apprenticeship. After the 1870 Education Act leading to compulsory elementary education a school board was established in 1871.<sup>72</sup> The library was open twice a month on Saturday mornings 9.00-10.00 for pupil teachers and 10.00-11.00 for head and assistant teachers, so they would be able to attend outside school hours. The holdings of the library suggest that it was a source of education rather than entertainment. The catalogue is divided as follows:

Biography	48
Education	27
Fiction	47
Geography, Voyages, Travel	47
History	96
Language	23
Literature (General), Essays, Translation, etc.	109
Poetry	47
Science, Natural History, etc.	67
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>511<sup>73</sup></b>

By this time light literature was predominant in many libraries, but of the 511 books in the pupil teachers' library only 47 were fiction. The inclusion of a section on education also indicates that the library was mainly vocational. It would be useful in helping pupil teachers to prepare lessons and qualify.

The *Educational Enquiry* of 1833 covered day schools and Sunday schools. A question on libraries was included. A study of the returns shows that in England libraries were concentrated in Cheshire, Lancashire, the West Riding of Yorkshire,

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<sup>72</sup> Brian Moriarty, *Politics and Education in Huddersfield in the Late Nineteenth Century, Huddersfield. A Most Handsome Town*, ed. E.A. Hilary Haigh, 530-1.

<sup>73</sup> Huddersfield and District Pupil Teachers' Library, *Catalogue [1881]*.

Northumberland, London, Warwickshire and Hampshire. The percentages of schools having a library ranged from 10.08% in Lancashire to only 1.74% in Lincolnshire. The West Riding of Yorkshire was second with 8.34%, and far higher than the 4.63% for England as a whole. When the infants schools, where the children were younger and there was less likelihood of a library, are excluded, the percentage was higher with 8.77% for the West Riding.<sup>74</sup> These percentages seem low: less than one school in ten in the West Riding of Yorkshire had a library, yet compared with provision nationally the percentage was relatively high. An explanation can be found in the large number of Sunday schools concentrated in this area. Where libraries are noted in day schools, it is usually in association with a Sunday school, for example, the National school in Huddersfield township had a small lending library. With a daily attendance of 235 boys and 145 girls and a Sunday attendance of 285 boys and 187 girls it had many potential readers.<sup>75</sup> Evidence of the state of book provision in schools in Halifax and Huddersfield was provided in 1850-1 when government inspectors assessed their books and apparatus. Comments such as fair, moderate or deficient appear in the reports.<sup>76</sup> The books used in schools were inspected, but there were no references to libraries as such.

Government reports provide some information on the use of libraries and books in education, but for more detailed information on individual school libraries the primary sources should be consulted. There are few records of day schools

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<sup>74</sup> Edward R. Reid-Smith, School libraries in 1833, *Education Libraries Bulletin*, 16(3), Autumn 1973, 18-21.

<sup>75</sup> House of Commons, *Abstract of Answers and Returns on the State of Education in England and Wales*, 1833, Vol. III, 1,170.

<sup>76</sup> Committee of the Council on Education, *Reports by her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools*, 1851-52, Vol. II, 180-92.



extant for the early and mid-nineteenth century in Halifax and Huddersfield as elsewhere. One major primary source is school logbooks, particularly after 1870. These are day to day records of school life with some reference to books, but are primarily concerned with such matters as lessons, attendance and school buildings, so they are not useful as a source of evidence for school libraries other than to suggest their absence.

Some records survive for the British School at Great Albion Street, Halifax. There was a connection between the school library and the juvenile library of the Halifax Mechanics' Institution and it is not a typical example of a library as most schools were not in this fortunate position. It is probable that the school and the mechanics' institution library were one and the same, at least for a time. William Corke, the schoolmaster, was librarian of the Halifax Mechanics Institution 1837-45. He became a life member in 1860 after being a secretary and director over a period of 25 years. This provides an illustration of the link between libraries and education, as the schoolmaster both taught and had responsibility for the school library, but also served as an officer of another educational institute, notably as librarian. His interest in libraries as evidenced by his position in the Mechanics' Institution, may have extended to the school. The Mechanics' Institution set up a juvenile library in 1854. It held 800 volumes, about 500 of which had been selected from the general library and the remainder had been purchased. A catalogue had been printed and was sold to the scholars at 1d each.<sup>77</sup> According to surviving records for the school, by 1870

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<sup>77</sup> Calderdale District Archives, HMI:3, Halifax Mechanics' Institution, *Minute Book* 1854-9.



there were two library catalogues for the school library: one for the boys' school and one for the girls' school so in effect there were two libraries. The school committee considered that additional books were necessary and granted £10 for the purpose.<sup>78</sup>

Not all schools had libraries by the late nineteenth century: even the range of classroom books may have been narrow. At the Lanebottom British School, Walsden, Todmorden, a notice issued by the trustees 20 March 1876 stated:

The Books, etc., to be used in the School will be as few and as inexpensive as possible, and will be supplied at a reasonable rate by the Trustees.<sup>79</sup>

In conclusion: there are only scattered references to day schools both locally and nationally. Libraries may not seem to be of vital concern to day schools at a basic level, but the success of many Sunday school libraries as noted in Chapter 3 show how important libraries could be in education. They are covered in greater detail in the next chapter.<sup>80</sup>

## 5.4 SUBSCRIPTION LIBRARIES

### 5.4.1 Halifax Circulating Library

The early history of the Halifax Circulating Library has been outlined in Chapter 3.<sup>81</sup> Subscription libraries were a major cultural development of the latter half of the eighteenth century. By the 1820s, however, few new ones, with the exception of the London Library, were being founded. Middle class support was committed to the

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<sup>78</sup> Calderdale District Archives, MISC:83/3/3, Halifax British Schools, Great Albion Street School, Halifax, *Committee Meetings 1870-98*.

<sup>79</sup> Calderdale District Archives, MISC: 361/1, Lanebottom School, Walsden, Todmorden, *Trustees Minute Book, 1876-7*.

<sup>80</sup> See above 3.8.3 and see below 6.5.

<sup>81</sup> See above 3.5.1.

literary and philosophical societies. The Halifax Circulating Library continued as a separate institute until 1866 when it joined with the Halifax Literary and Philosophical Society. This combined approach between the two types of society was quite common, for example, there were proposals to unite the Leeds Library with the Leeds Literary and Philosophical Society throughout the 1850s, but they were never carried out.<sup>82</sup> From its formation in 1830 the Halifax Literary and Philosophical Society was closely associated with the Halifax Circulating Library due to both physical proximity and overlap in membership. The Circulating library was housed in the New Rooms, Harrison Road where the assembly and concert rooms and a newsroom were also located. The Literary and Philosophical Society was also based in the New Rooms until it had its own adjacent building in 1834. In 1830 the Circulating Library had 168 members and the literary and philosophical society had 55 founder members, of which 27 were also members of the Circulating Library.<sup>83</sup> Christopher Rawson, a banker, was one of the founders of the literary and philosophical society and its first president, a position he was to hold until 1842. He was also president of the Circulating Library 1830-4. The Reverend William Turner, Minister of Northgate-End Unitarian Chapel, Halifax 1828-53 and author of religious works, was one of the honorary secretaries of the Literary and Philosophical society 1830-53 and was secretary of the Circulating Library 1830-4.<sup>84</sup> He also served as a director of the Halifax Mechanics' Institution, which is referred

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<sup>82</sup> Frank Beckwith, *The Leeds Library 1768-1968*, 52-3.

<sup>83</sup> Halifax Circulating Library, *A Catalogue of the Books belonging to the Halifax Subscription Library [1830]*, 137-9.

Halifax Literary and Philosophical Society, *1830-1930 Centenary Handbook*, Halifax: Privately printed, 1930, 6-15.

<sup>84</sup> Calderdale District Archives, MISC:49/4, Halifax Circulating Library, *Minutes 1820-48*.



to in a later section.<sup>85</sup> After the amalgamation of the two societies, the joint society continued as the Halifax Literary and Philosophical Society with the words 'circulating library' omitted from the name. The later history of the library is considered in the section on the Halifax Literary and Philosophical Society.<sup>86</sup> In effect, the Circulating Library had become the library of the Literary and Philosophical society, although it had been founded 61 years earlier. The union suggests that by the late nineteenth century middle class libraries had become difficult to sustain without other activities such as lectures and classes.

The minutes of the library only survive until 1848, so little is known of the last 28 years of the library's history as a separate organisation. Although the membership had increased only slowly, the Circulating Library was far from being an inactive organisation during these years. The number of volumes more than doubled between 1837 and 1866 from over 7,000 to over 15,000.<sup>87</sup> It was by far the biggest library in Halifax and was larger than the Huddersfield Subscription Library, which held over 10,000 volumes. It even exceeded the Bradford Subscription Library with over 13,000 volumes.<sup>88</sup> Thus the Halifax Circulating Library was not only the largest library in Halifax, but was also one of the foremost libraries in the West Riding. Yet the latest surviving membership for 1842 comprises only 179 members at a time when Halifax township had a population of 19,881 in 1841, so less than 1% of the population were members and had access to this important

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<sup>85</sup> See below 5.7.2.

<sup>86</sup> See below 5.5.2.

<sup>87</sup> William White, *History, Gazetteer, and Directory, of the West-Riding of Yorkshire [1837]*, Vol. 1, 403.

William White, *Directory [1866]*, 690.

<sup>88</sup> William White, *Directory [1866]*, 12, 291, 473.



collection.<sup>89</sup> The membership was middle class and few people would benefit. Even after the amalgamation with the Literary and Philosophical Society in 1866 there was still a relatively narrow membership base.

#### 5.4.2 Huddersfield Subscription Library

The Huddersfield Subscription Library that was also described in Chapter 3 survived until 1906.<sup>90</sup> Less is known about it than about the Halifax Circulating Library as no minute books survive and there is no equivalent to the *Halifax Antiquarian Society Transactions*' detailed article by E.P. Rouse.<sup>91</sup> According to White's directories, it was located at Joseph Brook's bookshop and had moved to his shop in New Market Place by 1866.<sup>92</sup> Despite the size and age of the library, it was still housed on bookseller's premises. The Halifax Circulating Library, an older and more sizeable library, also rented premises and although both these libraries were important features in the social and literary life of the middle classes and were well established, they did not have their own buildings. Subscriptions were perhaps directed towards the purchase of books, for it was not a static collection. Like the Halifax Circulating Library, the number of volumes in the Huddersfield Subscription

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<sup>89</sup> Halifax Circulating Library, *A Catalogue of Books belonging to the Halifax Subscription Library [1842]*, Halifax: Whitley and Booth, 1842, 160-2.  
*The Victoria History of the County of York, Volume 3*, ed. William Page, London: Constable, 1913, 533.

<sup>90</sup> See above 3.5.2.

<sup>91</sup> E.P. Rouse, *Old Halifax Circulating Library, 1768-1866*.

<sup>92</sup> William White, *Directory [1866]*, 291, 334.

Library increased. In 1837 the library held over 4,000 volumes, but in 1866 the number of volumes had risen to over 10,000. Similarly, it was the largest library in the town. The Huddersfield Mechanics' Institution was one of the leading mechanics' institutes in England and although it was only founded in 1841 and had a library of over 6,000 volumes in 1866, it was smaller than the Subscription Library.<sup>93</sup>

Catalogues show the size and content of the library. An 1831 catalogue reveals a high number of works of fiction.<sup>94</sup> A catalogue appendix confirms this trend.<sup>95</sup> Another catalogue was published in 1881, which was divided into subject categories as follows:

Theology, Morals, Mental Philosophy, Education,	
Politics, Law, Statistics, Social and Political Economy	304
History, Antiquities	422
Biography, Memoirs, Private Correspondence	616
Geography, Topography, Voyages, Travels	814
Natural Philosophy, Mechanics, Manufactures,	
Chemistry, Physiology, General Science	97
Natural History, Geology, Botany, Agriculture	135
Fiction	1,173
Poetry and the Drama	148
Essays, Critical and Miscellaneous Literature, Collected	
Works, etc.	333
Architecture and the Fine Arts	52
Bound Magazines, Reviews and Works of Reference	47
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4,141<sup>96</sup></b>

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<sup>93</sup> William White, *History, Gazetteer, and Directory of the West Riding of Yorkshire [1837]*, Vol. 1, 365.

William White, *Directory [1866]*, 291.

<sup>94</sup> See above 3.5.2.

<sup>95</sup> Huddersfield Subscription Library, *Appendix to the Catalogue of the Huddersfield Subscription Library June 1864, to September, 1872*, Huddersfield: B. Brown, 1872.

<sup>96</sup> Huddersfield Subscription Library, *Catalogue of the Huddersfield Subscription Library [1881]*, Huddersfield: B. Brown, 1881.



The fiction class was the largest with 1,173 titles, although clearly readers had a variety of interests.

Membership lists have not survived for this period, but the cost of the subscription suggests that it was a middle class body. The rules, which are reprinted with the 1881 catalogue, state:

Every person who becomes a member of the Society by purchase of a new ticket, shall immediately advance Two Guineas [£2.10] for a ticket, and shall, at the same time, pay his annual subscription of one Guinea [£1.05]...<sup>97</sup>

Few people would have been able to afford these fees. Some revival of interest in the library took place when George Tomlinson (1837-97), the antiquarian, published a small book entitled *Some Account of the Founders of the Huddersfield Subscription Library* in 1875. He recognised the importance of preserving the library's history and emphasised the short time available in which to carry it out. He continued:

There is little time to lose, because Huddersfield is now in a sort of transitional state, - old buildings are being pulled down, old landmarks are being removed, and old faces are rapidly passing away...<sup>98</sup>

In May 1896 at the ninetieth annual meeting it was claimed:

...it may be truly said that nothing has formed a more potent factor in the history of Huddersfield than its Subscription Library.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Huddersfield Subscription Library, *Catalogue of the Huddersfield Subscription Library* [1881], v.

<sup>98</sup> George Tomlinson, *Some Account of the Founders of the Huddersfield Subscription Library*, 6.

<sup>99</sup> An Old Huddersfield Institution, *Huddersfield Chronicle*, 8,991, 23 May 1896, 6.



Yet the library could not survive on reminiscences and it had clearly outlived its usefulness by 1906 when it closed. Although there are no extant records, the high subscription points to a middle class membership and like Halifax, the largest library in the town would be accessible only to a small number of people.

### 5.4.3 Halifax New Subscription Library

A second subscription library in Halifax began in 1823, but far less is known about it than the Halifax Circulating Library. A short description of the library appeared in Walker's *Directory* of 1845:

#### LIBRARY, Old Cock Yard

The formation of this public library originated in a meeting held by the Dissenters, and was opened in 1823. Attendance is given by the Librarian on the afternoons of Wednesday and Saturday. Thomas Gledhill, Librarian.

Thomas Gledhill lived in the Old Cock Yard and kept a school in Winding Lane, Halifax.<sup>100</sup> The library was relatively small and of short duration compared with the Halifax Circulating Library. However, according to White's directories, it held as many as 1,500 volumes in 1837 and about 2,000 volumes in 1847.<sup>101</sup> The library may have been discontinued before 1853 because it is no longer referred to in White's directories. At the annual meeting in 1837, it was described as:

The Library, which now comprises a large body of standard literature, is greatly extending its usefulness; and considering the smallness of the subscription, offers numerous advantages to the reading public.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> J.U. Walker, *Directory of the Parish of Halifax [1845]*, 21, 33, 62.

<sup>101</sup> William White, *History, Gazetteer, and Directory, of the West-Riding of Yorkshire [1837]*, Vol. 1, 403.

William White, *Directory [1847]*, 430.

<sup>102</sup> *Halifax Guardian* 5(215), 7 January 1837, 2.

At the annual meeting held 30 December 1842, it was reported that two or three years previously library funds were in "rather embarrassing circumstances", but were now "highly satisfactory". The library had nearly 2,000 volumes, which it claimed comprised:

...the most popular and valuable works on all solid branches of general literature and science as well as a considerable portion of the lighter literature of the day.<sup>103</sup>

Halifax, therefore, had a second subscription library for a time, although it was much smaller than the Halifax Circulating Library and was more popular in nature. It held standard works and by 1842 "lighter literature of the day". The presence of a second subscription library may offer a partial explanation as to why the membership of the larger Circulating Library rose only slowly: some potential members may have subscribed to the second library instead. As the Circulating Library was the largest in Halifax, it is a matter for conjecture why a second library was formed. It may have been due to religious differences rather than the preference for another type of literature, as dissenters started the second library. However, the formation of a second subscription library in larger towns was not uncommon. Even as early as 1822 Edward Baines' *Directory* lists in Leeds in addition to the "Old Subscription Library" in Commercial Street, a New Subscription Library at Albion Street.<sup>104</sup> Similarly, in York in addition to York Subscription Library, there was the Select Subscription Library and in Hull both the Hull Subscription Library and the

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<sup>103</sup> New Subscription Library, *Halifax Guardian*, 11(528), 7 January 1843, 5.

<sup>104</sup> Edward Baines, *History, Directory and Gazetteer, of the County of York, Vol. 1 West Riding*, 117.

Hull New Subscription Library.<sup>105</sup> The Hull Subscription Library had 475 subscribers and over 15,000 volumes and was “said to be the most extensive between the Humber and the Tweed”.<sup>106</sup> Yet, a second subscription library had been founded in 1807 with an annual subscription of 12s 6d. The subscription to the older library at 25s was twice as much suggesting that many readers may have sought a cheaper alternative.<sup>107</sup>

#### 5.4.4 Luddenden Library

The earlier history of the Luddenden Library has been covered in Chapter 3.<sup>108</sup> It continued in existence until 1917. The Lord Nelson Inn, which housed the library, was in Midgley township, which had a population rise of 26.81% between 1831 and 1891. Most of Luddenden was in Warley township with a growth rate of 62.69% during the same years.<sup>109</sup> There was no parallel rise in the library membership which remained constant at 19-22 to the 1890s and then rose slightly, so for example, the library had 38 members in 1898, according to a loan register for 1834-1914.<sup>110</sup> The library was a proprietary library belonging to its shareholders and even in 1898, if a share was to let, which was seldom, it was “soon snapped up under severe competition.”<sup>111</sup> Thus with a limited membership, shares were in demand. Having only small number of shares, it retained the nature of a club or society rather than becoming a large subscription library. The same surnames recur in the loan registers

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<sup>105</sup> Edward Baines, *History, Directory and Gazetteer, of the County of York, Vol. 2 East and North Ridings*, 130, 335.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid*, 254.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid*, 254.

<sup>108</sup> See above 3.5.3.

<sup>109</sup> See above 4.2.1.

<sup>110</sup> Calderdale District Archives, SPL:238, Luddenden Library, *A Second Loan Register 1834-1914*.

<sup>111</sup> John Longbottom, *Local Notes and Queries*, Number 1,042, “Ye Olde Luddenden Library”, 12.



and although names are often concentrated in particular localities, it suggests family connections with the library. The surnames Garnett, Patchett and Wormald occur with particular frequency.<sup>112</sup>

Most surviving primary evidence relates to the latter part of the nineteenth century, but notably a copy of the 1830 resolution to remove all seditious and deistical publications from the library is extant, illustrating the contemporary political climate. It was common practice at that time for libraries to exclude works of religious and political controversy, but this was usually when books were selected for purchase. So the decision to purchase them must have been made previously, and the committee was questioning the judgement of their predecessors. Moreover, the resolution to remove the books was not unanimous: with 16 for and seven against.<sup>113</sup>

The radical newspaper, the *Voice of the West Riding* criticised the move:

...but alas! Like many other human institutions it [the library] has undergone a deplorable change; for as a great number of the old members are dead, and others have sold their shares, a large number of the most bigoted and intolerant principles have taken the place of the old ones; amongst the rest is a slave driving tory cotton lord, a pot-bellied carpenter (one of whom it would be difficult to tell whether his brains lay in his belly or his head), the clerk of the church, the schoolmaster, a little hypocritical bookbinder, a young puppy of a worsted manufacturer, one of a firm that is noted for giving low wages and running their mill long hours.<sup>114</sup>

The article continued that the members determined to exclude Paine's works, Volney's *Ruins of Empire*, *Law of Nature*, and a number of political pamphlets and

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<sup>112</sup> Calderdale District Archives, SPL:238 Luddenden Library, *A Second Loan Register 1834-1914*.

<sup>113</sup> Calderdale District Archives, SPL:239, Luddenden Library, *Notes 1830-97*.

<sup>114</sup> Ignorance, Hypocrisy, Bigotry and Intolerance, *Voice of the West Riding*, 1(38), 2 February 1834, 304.

other works.<sup>115</sup> It was also pointed out that the hypocrisy of the exercise as the withdrawn volumes were distributed amongst the members by lots instead of being disposed of.<sup>116</sup> This incident illustrates that what was interpreted as controversial or unacceptable could alter with a change in the composition of the membership and political views of the committee.

Not all of those described can be identified as directories and census returns reveal many names in common and occupations<sup>are</sup> often broadly described and subject to change. However, the schoolmaster was probably Thomas Bancroft. He was on the membership list for the library in 1834.<sup>117</sup> In White's *Directory* of 1842 he is described in the Midgley township section as librarian to the subscription library, and his name is listed under the heading "Academies".<sup>118</sup> Timothy Wormald was clerk to the church at this time and the "young puppy of a worsted manufacturer" was likely to be James Titterington, a friend of Branwell Brontë.<sup>119</sup> They were both members in 1834.<sup>120</sup>

The social side of the library was well developed. Meetings were held monthly. John Wormald, who was later to become secretary, described library night in the winter 1871-2. When the books were issued:

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<sup>115</sup> Constantin François de Volney, *The Ruins; or a Survey of the Revolutions of Empires*, [London]: A. Seale, c.1795.

Constantin François de Volney, *Catechism of French Citizens. The Law of Nature; or, Catechism of Reason*, London: W. Tooke, c.1796.

<sup>116</sup> Ignorance, Hypocrisy, Bigotry and Intolerance, 304.

Calderdale District Archives, SPL:239, Luddenden Library, *Notes 1830-97*.

<sup>117</sup> Calderdale District Archives, SPL:238, Luddenden Library, *A Second Loans Register 1834-1914*.

<sup>118</sup> William White, *Directory [1842]*, 430.

<sup>119</sup> Daphne Du Maurier, *The Infernal World of Branwell Brontë*, London: Gollancz, 1960, Reprint, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972, 119-20.

<sup>120</sup> Calderdale District Archives, SPL:238, Luddenden Library, *A Second Loan Register 1834-1914*.

The names were gone through again, until every one had four calls, and in the meantime the quart pots made other journeys down and up stairs.<sup>121</sup>

Around the middle of the nineteenth century an annual supper was instituted:

At that time these annual gatherings were known throughout the parish, and were attended often by men high up the ladders in the literary, scientific, and artistic worlds.<sup>122</sup>

The library was not merely a social club where members could meet on library night, but literary figures might also attend the dinners. Later accounts appear in the *Halifax Courier* in the 1890s of the members' annual outing.

A catalogue dating from around the late 1890s survives with 1,515 entries. It relates to the number of volumes rather than the number of titles and by this time the library had been in existence for over a century, yet given the low membership the number was not inconsiderable. The catalogue is not arranged by author or subject, but possibly in order of date of purchase. It was not simply a library of light literature as many of the earlier numbers relate to theological works. Fiction was added later including novels by Walter Scott, Dickens, the Brontës and Disraeli. History and travel books and series such as *Chamber's Journal* were also represented.<sup>123</sup>

The Luddenden Library continued, but it was still in the nature of a book club with a relatively small membership. The social activities in connection with the library flourished and readers had access both to books in serious concerns such as theology and science to lighter literature. In a rural area with a dispersed population

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<sup>121</sup> John Longbottom, Local Notes and Queries, Number 1,042, "Ye Olde Luddenden Librarye", 12.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid, 12.

<sup>123</sup> Luddenden Library, *A Catalogue of Books belonging to the Circulating Library at Luddenden*, Halifax: Whitley and Booth, c.1896.



members may have lived some distance from the library; to visit the libraries and bookshops of Halifax would have involved an even lengthier journey. Luddenden therefore was fortunate in having its own library, but it was in no sense a public library as it was only open to shareholders, so most people in Luddenden would have been excluded.

#### **5.4.5 Sowerby Library**

There was a library in Sowerby in 1847 as it is listed together with the Luddenden Library in the subscribers to William Heaton's *The Flowers of Calderdale*, which was published in that year, but no other evidence appears to have survived.<sup>124</sup>

#### **5.4.6 Brighouse Subscription Library**

The Brighouse Subscription Library, founded in 1784 and which continued throughout most of the nineteenth century, was referred to in Chapter 3.<sup>125</sup> The books were periodically renewed and in April 1859 there was a sale of 500 old volumes at the Wellington Inn. The proceeds of this sale were used to buy new books.<sup>126</sup>

#### **5.4.7 Todmorden Old Library**

Todmorden Old Library, which started in 1798, was referred to briefly in the section on other subscription libraries in Chapter 3.<sup>127</sup> It was housed at the Golden Lion Inn. and celebrated its centenary in 1898. The minutes and records of this library no longer survive, but the *Todmorden Advertiser* reported on some of the annual

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<sup>124</sup> William Heaton, *The Flowers of Calder Dale: Poems*, 138.

<sup>125</sup> See above 3.5.4.

<sup>126</sup> R. Mitchell, *Brighouse. Portrait of a Town*, 158-9.

<sup>127</sup> See above 3.5.5.

dinner and detailed the verbose speeches. On the celebration of the centenary, the menu was quoted as:

:-Soup: hare; fish: cod and oyster sauce; entre: stuffed veal and ham; removes: sirloin beef, boiled turkey and ham, roast goose, boiled mutton and tongue, roast pork; sweets: plum pudding, apple tart, rhubarb tart, custards, jellies, trifles; cheese and celery; dessert.<sup>128</sup>

Speeches were made including a toast to the army, navy and reserve forces. Songs were sung, and according to the newspaper report "The meeting was an exceedingly pleasant and memorable one."<sup>129</sup> This report presents a picture of prosperity, which may be misleading as the library was discontinued in 1902 and sold at public auction.<sup>130</sup> An alternative viewpoint from the self-congratulatory tone of the centenary celebrations was offered in December 1901:

...from the personal experience of former years, the writer knows the Sisyphus-like nature of the task attempting to galvanise this archaic institution into anything like vigorous vitality.<sup>131</sup>

Social events therefore may have been successful and ostentatious affairs, but the use made of the library may not have justified such optimism. All is not always as it appears.

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<sup>128</sup> Todmorden Old Library. Centenary Celebration Yesterday, *Todmorden Advertiser*, 2,134, 28 January 1898, 5.

<sup>129</sup> Todmorden Old Library. Centenary Celebration Yesterday, 5.

<sup>130</sup> Local News. Sale of the Old Library, *Todmorden Advertiser*, 2,352, 11 April 1902, 5.

<sup>131</sup> Todmorden Topics. The Todmorden Old Library, *Todmorden Advertiser*, 2,335, 13 December 1901, 5.

## 5.5 LITERARY AND PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY LIBRARIES

### 5.5.1 Introduction

The formation of literary and philosophical society libraries mainly in the early nineteenth century has been introduced in the previous chapter in the section on adult education. As noted they were important in the foundation of the modern museum movement, which tend to overshadow their libraries.<sup>132</sup> Peter Brears in his 1984 article on Yorkshire philosophical society museums 1820-50, identified museums at Leeds, Bradford, Halifax, Wakefield, Sheffield, York, Hull, Whitby and Scarborough and eleven in other parts of England including Newcastle, Norwich and Plymouth.<sup>133</sup> These were museums, not libraries, but many of the societies would have had libraries, for example, in 1821, a sum not exceeding £50 was spent on the commencement of a permanent library at Leeds Literary and Philosophical Society.<sup>134</sup>

The Newcastle Literary and Philosophical Society founded in 1793, had a library of over 500 works in 1796, which had risen to 8,000 volumes in 1825.<sup>135</sup> One of the founder members of the Society was the Reverend William Turner (1761-1859), who was the father of the Reverend William Turner of Halifax. The

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<sup>132</sup> See above 4.4.5.

<sup>133</sup> Peter Brears, Temples of the Muses: The Yorkshire Philosophical Museums 1820-50, *Museums Journal*, 84(1), June/July 1984, 3-4.

<sup>134</sup> E. Kitson Clark, *The History of 100 Years of Life of the Leeds Philosophical and Literary Society*, Leeds: Jowett and Sowry, 1924, 29.

<sup>135</sup> Charles Parish, *The History of the Literary and Philosophical Society of Newcastle upon Tyne, Volume II 1896-1989*, Newcastle: Literary and Philosophical Society of Newcastle upon Tyne, 1990, 7-13, 106.



younger William Turner was one of the honorary secretaries of the Halifax Literary and Philosophical Society 1830-53 and family links between different societies suggests discussion and exchange of ideas on both the cultural and organizational aspects of similar societies.<sup>136</sup>

Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society had a library from 1783. In 1840 the library catalogue comprised 18 pages while the 1845 catalogue had increased to 25 pages.<sup>137</sup> These examples are from larger societies and therefore may not be typical, but doubtless there were many other libraries. White's directories refer to literary and philosophical societies in general town descriptions, for example, Halifax in the 1853 *Directory*:

The Halifax Literary and Philosophical Society was instituted in 1830, and now occupies an elegant Hall, erected in 1834, and contains a valuable museum.<sup>138</sup>

The library was not mentioned. In Huddersfield the library unusually took precedence:

The PHILOSOPHICAL HALL was built in 1837, in the Grecian style, by the Huddersfield Philosophical Society, which was formed in 1825, and has now a valuable library and a museum, and a well supplied *News Room*.<sup>139</sup>

The libraries were specialised with a limited number of readers whereas in contrast, museums have a popular appeal with visitors of all classes, public open days and

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<sup>136</sup> Charles Parish, *The History of the Literary and Philosophical Society of Newcastle upon Tyne, Volume II 1896-1989*, 106.

Halifax Literary and Philosophical Society, *1830-1930 Centenary Handbook*, 8.  
See below 5.5.2.

<sup>137</sup> Francis Nicholson, The Literary and Scientific Society 1781-1851, *Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society Manchester Memoirs*, 68(9), 1924, 127, 129.

<sup>138</sup> William White, *Directory and Gazetteer of Leeds, Bradford, Halifax, Huddersfield, Wakefield, and the Whole of the Clothing Districts of Yorkshire [1853]*, Sheffield: Leader, 1853, 551.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid*, 598.

exhibitions. Subscription libraries were far superior in terms of number of volumes. Nevertheless, some of the libraries were quite sizeable. The 1851 Education Census showed that the Todmorden Athenaeum had 674 volumes, Halifax Literary and Philosophical Society library had 500 volumes and the Huddersfield Philosophical Society library had as many as 2,000 volumes.<sup>140</sup>

### **5.5.2 Halifax Literary and Philosophical Society Library**

The Halifax Literary and Philosophical Society started in August 1830 with the aim of setting up a museum and organising scientific lectures. Six curators for geology, mineralogy, comparative anatomy, zoology, botany and antiquities and coins and a librarian were appointed in September.<sup>141</sup> It had close links with the Circulating Library with a largely middle class membership and the societies united in 1866. Christopher Rawson, president 1830-42, was also president of the Circulating Library 1830-4 and the Reverend William Turner was one of the honorary secretaries 1830-53 and was also secretary of the Circulating Library 1830-4.<sup>142</sup> The library of the Circulating Library has been described in the section on subscription libraries.<sup>143</sup> From 1866 it became in effect the library of the Halifax Literary and Philosophical Society. With such strong ties there may have seemed little need for a second library, but the libraries did not duplicate each other. The Circulating Library was more general: fiction, history, biography and travel were predominant whereas at least at the outset the Literary and Philosophical Society Library specialised in

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<sup>140</sup> Census of Great Britain 1851, *Education, Report and Tables*, 246-7.

<sup>141</sup> Calderdale District Archives, MISC:49/7/1, Halifax Literary and Philosophical Society, *Minute Book 1830-9*, 5.

<sup>142</sup> See above 5.4.1.

Halifax Literary and Philosophical Society, *1830-1930 Centenary Handbook*, 7-8.

<sup>143</sup> See above 3.5.1 and 5.4.1.

more scientific works. According to the 1833 annual report, the object of the Literary and Philosophical Society Library was not a miscellaneous library of general circulation, but chiefly a collection of the most valuable standard works in the different departments of science.<sup>144</sup> The library did not have a promising beginning. The first annual report states:

...this important branch of the Institution has failed to meet with its due measure of success. Instead of being regarded in its true light, as the criterion of our *literary* character, it has been looked upon as a department of subordinate importance...<sup>145</sup>

The situation had improved by the following year as Christopher Rawson, President 1830-42, donated 50 guineas and as many as 65 volumes were purchased. He also donated a further 13 volumes. Other members also made donations. Reports were received from the Hull Literary and Philosophical Society, Leeds Philosophical Society and the Yorkshire Philosophical Society, which were similar organisations.<sup>146</sup>

The Society suffered financial difficulties in the 1840s, but revived in the 1850s and the library was augmented step by step.<sup>147</sup> Books were purchased, but the library, like the museum departments, relied heavily on donations. They were therefore dependent on the generosity of members and others. The collection was considerably enhanced by the bequest of William Priestley of 138 etymological works in 1861, as noted in the section on reading and private collections earlier in this chapter. Subsequently, a catalogue of the Society's library was issued in 1863

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<sup>144</sup> Halifax Literary and Philosophical Society, *Annual Report 1832*, 54.

<sup>145</sup> Halifax Literary and Philosophical Society, *Annual Report 1831*, 25-6.

<sup>146</sup> Halifax Literary and Philosophical Society, *Annual Report 1832*, 75-7.

<sup>147</sup> Halifax Literary and Philosophical Society, *1830-1930 Centenary Handbook*, 21-3.



comprising 481 printed volumes. The Priestley donation made up well over a quarter of the collection. Even with William Priestley's etymological books the library was relatively small and in 1863 held only 343 volumes before this major donation, although according to the Education Census of 1851 it held 500 volumes.<sup>148</sup> The amalgamation with the Circulating Library in 1866 considerably changed the nature of the library. The Circulating Library held far more volumes than the library of the Literary and Philosophical Society and the history of the library from this time is largely a continuation of the history of the Circulating Library. The interests of the members of the literary and philosophical society had been focused on the museum rather than the library, but the union tended to redress the balance. By 1881 the library had clearly benefited. According to the annual report of 1880:

To the library, indeed, it may be said, that the resources of the society have been very largely devoted during the past ten years; and, perhaps in the opinion of some, to a greater extent than is consistent with the aims and intentions of the Literary and Philosophical Society.<sup>149</sup>

Building improvements resulted in “the erection of a large, well-lighted, and convenient” library by 1871.<sup>150</sup> A new catalogue, which included 20,000 volumes, was compiled in 1874. This catalogue was divided into a general catalogue and a fiction catalogue. The general catalogue was made up of the following categories:

- A - Reference Books
- B - Philosophy
- C - Biography
- D - History

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<sup>148</sup> Census of Great Britain 1851, *Education, Report and Tables*, 247

<sup>149</sup> Halifax Literary and Philosophical Society, *Annual Report 1880*, 19.

<sup>150</sup> Halifax Literary and Philosophical Society, *Annual Report 1871*, 3.

- E - Geography
- F - Poetry
- G - Magazines<sup>151</sup>

Most of the books were from the Circulating Library, but on amalgamation with the more specialised library of the Literary and Philosophical Society, it might have been expected that the library would become more scientific and educational; instead there was an increased emphasis on more popular subjects, with fiction the largest category. In 1866 the library opened an account with Smith and Sons in addition to the account with Mudie's Circulating Library.<sup>152</sup> By 1882 the total number of books issued had risen sharply. Between April 1881 and April 1882 the issues had risen to 32,041 volumes (exclusive of monthly magazines) with an average of 75.5 volumes per member. The subject categories of the issues were:

History	400
Biography	710
Travels	803
Poetry	878
Science	672
Bound Magazines	1,715
Miscellaneous, not fiction (Mudie)	897
Fiction (Mudie)	5,206
Fiction	20,760
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>32,041<sup>153</sup></b>

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<sup>151</sup> Halifax Literary and Philosophical Society, *Annual Report 1874*, 6  
Halifax Literary and Philosophical Society, *Catalogue of Books of the Library [1874]*, Halifax: Birtwhistle, 1874, 4.

<sup>152</sup> Halifax Literary and Philosophical Society, *Annual Report 1867*, 5-6.

<sup>153</sup> Halifax Literary and Philosophical Society, *Annual Report 1882*, 14-15.

Given the nature of the society with its relatively small middle class membership of 424, an annual issue of 32,041 was considerable. The average issue of 75.5 per member indicated that each member was borrowing at least one volume a week. Fiction was by far the largest category making up over 81% of the issue. Many works of fiction would not be substantial and would be read for entertainment. With the increase in leisure time by the late nineteenth century, the library became increasingly a source of recreational reading. The members could purchase their own books, but they may have preferred to buy educational works for learning and reference and borrow light fiction, which was only read once, from the library. Six years later the annual issue April 1886-April 1887 had declined to 21,756, yet the number of members had also declined to 300 so it still showed an average issue per member of 72.52 volumes.<sup>154</sup>

To conclude - this library of 20,000 volumes, which was by far the largest library in Halifax, had to resort to obtaining books through Mudie's despite having a strong fiction section of its own. The contents of the library which had been built up from 1768, did not cater for the interests of the middle class members, whose tastes had changed. By the 1880s the demand for light literature was paramount. Indeed members wanted new works of fiction as soon as they were printed despite the library's holdings of thousands of other books for them to read.

### **5.5.3 Huddersfield Philosophical Society Library**

The Huddersfield Scientific and Mechanic Institute was formed in 1825. Benefactors led by Sir John Ramsden (1755-1839), landowner of Huddersfield, donated 700

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<sup>154</sup> Halifax Literary and Philosophical Society, *Annual Report 1887*, 7.



volumes to the library. Its successor was the Huddersfield Philosophical Society formed in the 1830s.<sup>155</sup> It was housed in the Philosophical Hall built in 1837. The Philosophical Hall had a library, museum and by 1853 a news room.<sup>156</sup> Society rules and a catalogue printed in 1850 survive. According to the 1851 *Education Census* the library held 2,000 volumes, four times as many as the Halifax Literary and Philosophical Society Library.<sup>157</sup> In the 1850 catalogue the highest number is 961, and the numbers were related to the titles, but as many were multi-volumed, the number of volumes would have been higher. Although it held some scientific works, particularly on natural history, mathematics and chemistry, they were few in number and it was not a scientific library. Literature was predominant. The catalogue lists many books on travel, biography and history and popular series such as the *Edinburgh Cabinet Library*, *Bohn's Standard Library* and *Constable's Miscellany*. Classics were covered by the *Family Classical Library* with 15 titles and 41 volumes. Thus it was more typical of a subscription library than a literary and scientific library.<sup>158</sup> As there was already a subscription library established in Huddersfield, the need for a second general library is debatable. However, the number of loans reached 1,917 in 1844-5.<sup>159</sup> It had 144 members and 192

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<sup>155</sup> John O' Connell, *From Mechanics' Institution to Polytechnic: Further and Higher Education, 1841-1970, Huddersfield. A Most Handsome Town*, ed. E.A. Hilary Haigh, 561.

<sup>156</sup> William White, *Directory and Topography of the Boroughs of Leeds, Halifax, Huddersfield and Wakefield...Yorkshire Woollen District [1858]*, Sheffield: Leader, 1858, 598.

<sup>157</sup> See below Figures 5/V and 5/VI.

<sup>158</sup> Huddersfield Philosophical Society, *Catalogue of Books in the Library of the Huddersfield Philosophical Society [1850]*, Huddersfield: Pilter, 1850.

<sup>159</sup> Huddersfield, *Halifax Guardian*, 13(657), 21 June 1845, 5.

subscribers. June 1847-June 1848 the number of issues was 5,472: 2,475 books and 2,997 periodicals. The annual report revealed that the proportions of books held in the library on different subjects and the proportion of issues for each subject were not the same. Scientific works were scarcely represented at all in the issues whereas fiction, particularly Scott and Bulwer Lytton were heavily used:

...notwithstanding the intrinsic value of many of these scientific works, they are in very little requisition, as 700 volumes, chiefly of this class, have not been taken out of the library at all during the past year, and many others have only been taken out once or twice...The works of Scott and Bulwer [Lytton] have been taken out 894 times during the year; and the bound volumes of periodicals (chiefly on account of their light literature) 941 times - thus showing that the works of these two authors, together with the volumes of periodicals, have formed more than one-half of the volumes circulated.<sup>160</sup>

The readers therefore sought recreational reading rather than scientific enlightenment. The report continued:

The council do not consider the circulation of light literature in itself an evil, but rather it bears too great a proportion to the circulation of works of real merit in history and general literature.<sup>161</sup>

The membership may have been more popular than the subscription library membership as the society originated in an early mechanics' institute. The Huddersfield Mechanics' Institution was not started until 1841. Thereafter it may have presented the Philosophical Society with strong competition. The Philosophical Society ceased to exist around 1857 when the books were sold, some of which were bought by the mechanics' institution.<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>160</sup> Local News. Huddersfield. Huddersfield Philosophical Society, *Leeds Mercury*, 85(5,985), 19 August 1848, 9.

<sup>161</sup> Local News. Huddersfield. Huddersfield Philosophical Society, 9.

<sup>162</sup> Huddersfield University, Huddersfield Mechanics' Institution, HM1/1/6, *General Committee Minutes, Annual Reports, 1856-7*, 333, 357-8.



### 5.5.4 Huddersfield Literary and Scientific Society Library

The Huddersfield Literary and Scientific Society, a possible successor of the Huddersfield Philosophical Society was formed in 1857.<sup>163</sup> With its specialised library, it had much in common with literary and philosophical societies, but its formation was relatively late. Annual reports show that there was a museum, a library, classes and a microscopic section and on the social side soirées and conversaziones. Early reports reveal concern with forming a museum, but in 1864 it was reported that:

The formation of a Library of Works of Reference on scientific subjects has engaged much of the attention of the Committee during the past year...The library has also been enriched by the donation of the Transactions of the West-Riding Geological and Polytechnic Society, which contain many valuable scientific papers, and by a number of papers read before the Leeds Philosophical Society, etc.<sup>164</sup>

A list of additions to the library comprised 12 titles, mainly scientific.<sup>165</sup> Journals rather than books played a prominent part in the communication of scientific and other information to members. In 1864 the annual report lists 32 titles.<sup>166</sup> An issue register entitled 'Library Book' survives from March 1857 to August 1860. It seems to be entirely made up of journal parts and the issues for only one year from March 1857 to March 1858 amounted to 566.<sup>167</sup> In 1865 discussions took place between the Society and the Huddersfield Naturalists' Society and the Huddersfield Archaeological and Topographical Association with a view to amalgamating and

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<sup>163</sup> See above 5.5.3.

<sup>164</sup> Huddersfield Literary and Scientific Society, *Annual Report 1864*, 4-5.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid, 11

<sup>166</sup> Huddersfield Literary and Scientific Society, *Annual Report 1864*, 10.

<sup>167</sup> Huddersfield University Archives, 4/17, Huddersfield Literary and Scientific Society, *Library Book [Loan Register] (1857-60)*.



erecting a new building, but the scheme was not carried out. The libraries of these organisations are described later in this chapter.<sup>168</sup> By 1870 interest in the Society had declined and both the museum and library stagnated for lack of space and funds. The Society revived in the 1870s and in 1885 it became part of the newly established Huddersfield Technical College and Mechanics' Institution.<sup>169</sup> The literary and scientific society undertook an additional responsibility when in 1871 it took over the library of the Huddersfield Foreign Library Society: a library of foreign language works in existence since 1851, which is described below.<sup>170</sup> The librarian of the Literary and Scientific Society was Benjamin Brown, who was also a bookseller. The library of the Foreign Library Society was housed on his premises from this date suggesting that he had played a part in its transfer. The Foreign Library remained in Benjamin Brown's bookshop until 1877, where the books seemed so little used as "the volumes had accumulated venerable dust", and then it was moved into the rooms of the society.<sup>171</sup> A former feature of the Foreign Library Society was revived when the society subscribed to Rolandi's Foreign Circulating Library in London, from which thirty volumes were periodically obtained.<sup>172</sup>

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<sup>168</sup> See below 5.6.1.4 and 5.6.2.

<sup>169</sup> Stuart Davies, *The Making of a Municipal Museum: Huddersfield and the Naturalists Society and Huddersfield Archaeological and Topographical Association Library*, *Huddersfield. A Most Handsome Town*, ed. E.A. Hilary Haigh, 683-4.

<sup>170</sup> Annual Meeting of the Huddersfield Literary and Scientific Society, *Huddersfield Chronicle*, 1,145, 8 April 1871, 7.

<sup>171</sup> Huddersfield Literary and Scientific Society, *Annual Report 1877*, 7.

<sup>172</sup> Huddersfield Literary and Scientific Society, *Annual Report 1880*, 7.  
Huddersfield University Archives, FLS/3/15, Huddersfield Foreign Library Society, *Accounts*.

## 5.6 OTHER SPECIAL LIBRARIES

### 5.6.1 Natural History Society Libraries

#### 5.6.1.1 Introduction

Many people were interested in natural history in the nineteenth century. Field clubs and botanical societies flourished particularly in Yorkshire. In 1873 according to one estimate, there were 169 local scientific societies in Great Britain and Ireland, of which 104 were field clubs, most of which had been formed since 1850. After an earlier unsuccessful attempt in 1864 when six small societies united as the West Riding Consolidated Naturalists' Society, the Yorkshire Naturalists' Union: a federation of naturalists' societies in Yorkshire was formed in 1877.<sup>173</sup> In Halifax the Naturalists' Society was formed in 1864 and the Ovenden Naturalists' Society the following year.<sup>174</sup> The Halifax Scientific Society was formed in 1874. It was for a time known as the Halifax Geologists' Field Club; a botanical section, later natural history section, was not founded until about 1886.<sup>175</sup> The section may not have been founded until this late date because of the work of the Halifax Literary and Philosophical Society in this area.

#### 5.6.1.2 Rastrick and Brighouse Naturalists' Society Library

Small towns often had their own naturalist societies. An undated catalogue survives for the Rastrick and Brighouse Naturalists' Society. The books are categorised as follows:

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<sup>173</sup> David Elliston Allen, *The Naturalist in Britain. A Social History*, Princeton, New Jersey, 1994, 153.

<sup>174</sup> Arthur Porritt, *18th and 19th Century Clubs and Societies in Halifax*, 79.

<sup>175</sup> W.B. Crump and Charles Crossland, *The Flora of the Parish of Halifax*, Halifax: Halifax Scientific Society, 1904, lxiii.

Botany	21
Fungology	4
Entomology	12
Coleoptera	1
Conchology	3
Aquaria	3
Ichthyology	2
Geology	3
Handbooks of Natural History	8
No category	11
Miscellaneous	5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>73<sup>176</sup></b>

This was only a small library with room for expansion; within each section of the catalogue space has been left for new entries. Notes at the beginning of the catalogue refer to meetings every fortnight in the ClubRoom, Star Inn, Rastrick. It was not only a library as members collected specimens and had discussions. It was like a social club. The evenings were spent before nine o'clock arranging and classifying specimens and "indulging in general conversation" and after nine o'clock discussing natural history subjects.<sup>177</sup>

### 5.6.1.3 Todmorden Botanical Society Library

Another natural history society in a small town was the Todmorden Botanical Society founded in 1852. The term botanical society implies a narrower focus than a natural history society, but this may not have been the case. The Todmorden Botanical Society had as many as 186 members in 1867 and with almost 600 volumes in the library exceeded the Huddersfield Naturalists' Library. There was an

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<sup>176</sup> Rastrick and Brighouse Naturalists' Society, *Catalogue of Books belonging to the Rastrick and Brighouse Naturalists' Society*, Brighouse: Bayes, N.D.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid.



average issue of 80 books and periodicals per meeting.<sup>178</sup> No catalogue survives, although one was compiled in 1867.<sup>179</sup> Lists of accessions appear in newspaper reports. However, by the 1890s the Society had declined and in the late 1890s 454 volumes from the library were handed over to the Todmorden Public Library.<sup>180</sup>

#### 5.6.1.4 Huddersfield Naturalists' Society Library

Huddersfield had its own naturalists' society from 1847. It held exhibitions, organised field trips, published transactions and monthly circulars and had a library.

A catalogue printed in 1875 shows 465 volumes in the following categories:

Geology	11
Botany	168
Entomology	95
Ornithology	24
Oology	7
Ichthyology	4
Conchology	13
General Zoology	70
Microscopy	6
Miscellaneous	67
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>465<sup>181</sup></b>

Membership was intended to be solely for the middle class. It was reported in 1869 that the annual subscription was set low:

In order to enable all persons, however humble their means, to enjoy the advantages of a combined study of the natural history sciences...<sup>182</sup>

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<sup>178</sup> Todmorden Botanical Society's Annual Meeting and Dinner, *Todmorden Advertiser*, 507, 11 May 1867, 4.

<sup>179</sup> Todmorden Botanical Society, *Todmorden Advertiser*, 520, 10 August 1867, 4.

<sup>180</sup> What Todmordians Read, *Todmorden Advertiser*, 2,184, 13 January 1899, 6.

<sup>181</sup> Huddersfield Naturalists' Society, *The Patrons, Officers and List of Members (with their Study and Address) of the Huddersfield Naturalists' Society for 1875 together with the Catalogue of Books in the Library*, Huddersfield: B. Brown, 1875, 16-27.

<sup>182</sup> Huddersfield Naturalists' Society. Fourth Exhibition, *Huddersfield Chronicle*, 1,017, 9 October 1869, 8.

The number of members of the Society was 109 in 1883. The library had 31 readers and an annual issue of 190 books. Like the Huddersfield Literary and Scientific Society, magazines played a part in providing information, but only three journals were circulated to nine readers with an annual issue of 68.<sup>183</sup> Furthermore, annual reports show that at least a small number were reading natural history books around the 1880s.

### **5.6.2 Huddersfield Archaeological and Topographical Association Library**

The study of history and archaeology and antiquarianism was a parallel development to the study of natural history both nationally and locally in the second half of the nineteenth century. It was associated with national and local pride and interest in collecting and preserving historical documents. The British Archaeological Association and the Archaeological Institute were both founded in 1843 and other more specialised societies such as the Royal Historical Society in 1868 followed.<sup>184</sup> Philippa Levine in an appendix to her book, *The Amateur and the Professional: Antiquarians, Historians and Archaeologists in Victorian England, 1838-86* lists 56 county and local societies in 1886 including, for example, Berkshire Archaeological and Architectural Society from 1871, Kent Archaeological Society from 1858 and the Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society from 1883.<sup>185</sup> Yorkshire too had an archaeological society formed in 1870. It originated in the Huddersfield

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<sup>183</sup> Huddersfield Naturalists' Society, *Annual Report 1883*, 4.

<sup>184</sup> Philippa Levine, *The Amateur and the Professional: Antiquarians, Historians and Archaeologists in Victorian England, 1838-86*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986, 40, 45.

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid*, 182-3.



Archaeological and Topographical Association, which was founded in 1864, although informal meetings had been held in the previous year. Although it was termed an archaeological society, it had, in practice, far wider antiquarian interests. The Yorkshire society published a journal, which includes some early annual reports, and a lengthy article on the history of the Society appeared in 1915 shortly after the fiftieth anniversary of its formation.<sup>186</sup> Two Huddersfield men, Sir Thomas Brooke and George Tomlinson made significant contributions to the Society. The former was one of the founders and was president from 1866 to his death in 1908. He bequeathed books and manuscripts to the library as noted in the section on reading and private collections noted earlier in this chapter.<sup>187</sup> George Tomlinson was secretary or joint secretary 1875-96. He was an antiquarian with an interest in the Huddersfield Subscription Library.<sup>188</sup> Thus a major Yorkshire historical society originated in Huddersfield and Huddersfield men played an important part in its management even after it became the Yorkshire Archaeological Society.

A printed copy of the secretary's letter to the public on the formation of the Association clearly states the need to preserve old documents:

Ancient charters and documents of great interest are lying neglected in the archives of private families, and are rapidly going to decay. A large number are in the hands of the working classes, who from time to time condemn them as useless and lumber, and consign them to the flames, or the Chandler's shop, and there are cases where ignorance

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<sup>186</sup> S.J. Chadwick, *The Yorkshire Archaeological Society. An Account of its Origin in 1863 and its Progress from that Date to 1913*, *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*, 23, 1915, 1-91.

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid*, 78, 83  
See above 5.2.

<sup>188</sup> S.J. Chadwick, *The Yorkshire Archaeological Society. An Account of its Origin in 1863 and its Progress from that Date to 1913*, 88-9.  
See above 5.4.2.



and mistrust have caused valuable documents to be destroyed lest they should become useful to others.<sup>189</sup>

A library was formed in 1867 before the Association expanded to include the whole of Yorkshire. The library remained in Huddersfield until 1896 when it was removed to Leeds. It was first located in a room behind George Tindall's bookshop at Market Walk and later in a room in Messrs. John Brooke and Sons warehouse, New Street. An important bequest from Miss Mary Turner in December 1867 was the first of many library donations. It was the collection of William Turner, solicitor of Hopton, Mirfield near Huddersfield. He was the grandson of John Turner, solicitor, whose private library was described in Chapter 3.<sup>190</sup> Other books were added by donation and a list of donations appeared in the *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal* in 1870. Most were from the time when the Society was the Huddersfield Archaeological and Topographical Association. Benefactors were listed: societies, authors and other individuals with many donating several volumes.<sup>191</sup> A catalogue was published in 1884.<sup>192</sup> Huddersfield played an important part in the study of Yorkshire's history by the formation of this society and its library of antiquarian books and manuscripts was located there until 1896, almost 30 years. The library focused on historical and antiquarian works, and was substantial both in value and number of volumes, yet as

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<sup>189</sup> S.J. Chadwick, *The Yorkshire Archaeological Society. An Account of its Origin in 1863 and its Progress from that Date to 1913*, 5-6, 21.

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid*, 21, 75-6.  
See above 3.2.

<sup>191</sup> *Lists of Books, Etc., Presented to the Huddersfield Archaeological and Topographical Association. During the Years 1868, 1869, and 1870*, *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*, 1, 1870, 347-52.

<sup>192</sup> *Yorkshire Archaeological and Topographical Association, Rules. Catalogue of Library. List of Members [1884]*, London: Bradbury and Agnew, 1884, v-xxi.

it would only be available to a small number of people, as the founders and members were middle class men.

### 5.6.3 Huddersfield Foreign Library Society

A Huddersfield Foreign Library Society was formed in 1851. It was stated in the rules that the aim was “the formation of a library of foreign language works”.<sup>193</sup> This was a special library in its own right, not an integral part of another society, and it comprised not merely books on foreign subjects, but books in foreign languages. There was no Halifax equivalent.

Leeds had had a foreign subscription library from about 1778. Its main founders were members of the Leeds Library and both libraries shared premises, and had members in common. The foreign library was dissolved in 1814 and it was absorbed into the Leeds Library, which undertook to spend at least £20 annually on the purchase of books in modern foreign languages.<sup>194</sup> Manchester had a Foreign Library from 1830. It was a private subscription library until it was taken over by the Public Libraries Committee in 1903. Foreigners living in Manchester and local people with connections abroad founded it.<sup>195</sup>

There must have been a demand for this kind of material. Even as early as 1815, as we have seen, in a general catalogue issued by Thomas Edwards of Halifax 738 of the 7,282 entries - more than a tenth - related to books in foreign languages.<sup>196</sup> This may have been because many works were unavailable in

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<sup>193</sup> Huddersfield Foreign Library, *Catalogue and Rules of the Huddersfield Foreign Library*, May, 1855, Huddersfield: Wheatley, 1855, 3.

<sup>194</sup> P.S. Morrish, Foreign-Language Books in Some Yorkshire Subscription Libraries 1785-1805, *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*, 53, 1981, 81.

<sup>195</sup> W.H. Shercliff, The Foreign Library, *Manchester Review*, 5, Spring 1950, 396.

<sup>196</sup> See above 3.1.1



translation or because of the absence of foreign language literature in other libraries. Whatever the possible reasons for the recognition of a need to establish a library of this type, it presupposes a sufficient number of people with knowledge of foreign languages. There were few foreign subjects living in Huddersfield Registration District - less than one in a thousand in 1851.<sup>197</sup> Nevertheless, there were enough people to form a society and those from the same country were likely to associate with each other. Some of the members on the list of subscribers in 1855 had names of foreign origin. One example is Karl Dammann who taught German at the Huddersfield Mechanics' Institution, Huddersfield College and Huddersfield Collegiate School.<sup>198</sup> French was also taught at the same colleges. Knowledge of foreign languages would be useful for commerce as well as broadening cultural horizons. Merchants seeking or competing in overseas markets would benefit by being able to communicate in other languages. An increasing number of people were travelling to foreign countries on business or to tour places of historical interest. Ladies were entitled to use the books on the same terms as the other subscribers according to the rules and in 1855 10 of the 59 members, were ladies.<sup>199</sup> The Huddersfield Female Educational Institute and most schools did not teach languages, but many middle class women were educated privately and knowledge of languages, particularly French, was regarded as a social accomplishment.

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<sup>197</sup> Census of Great Britain 1851, Population Tables Pt I, Ages and Occupations, 732.

<sup>198</sup> Huddersfield Foreign Library, *Catalogue and Rules of the Huddersfield Foreign Library*. May, 1855, 16.

William White, *Directory [1858]*, 457.

Huddersfield Mechanics' Institution, *Annual Report 1855*, 11.

<sup>199</sup> Huddersfield Foreign Library Society, *Catalogue and Rules of the Huddersfield Foreign Library*. May, 1855, 3, 16.



Frederic Schwann, an export merchant, was instrumental in the establishment of the Foreign Library Society and the council of the Society held its meetings in his warehouse. Later the library was moved to Mrs. Kemp's bookshop in 1853; James Wheatley succeeded her in 1854.<sup>200</sup> Frederic Schwann also provided a library for his employees, which became part of the early library of the Huddersfield Mechanics' Institution, which is covered in the section on mechanics' institutes.<sup>201</sup> His work underlines the importance of individual initiative in the formation of libraries. There were sufficient books for the publication of a catalogue in 1855 comprising 157 French, 67 German, 12 Italian and five Spanish titles.<sup>202</sup> By 1858 the Society had suffered a decline in interest with an issue of "only 402" including the journal *Revue des Deux Mondes*, but even this figure seems substantial for a small society.<sup>203</sup> Accounts for the 1860s show binding, stationery and books purchased from James Wheatley's bookshop and subscription receipts from P. Rolandi's Foreign Circulating Library, London.<sup>204</sup> The Huddersfield Foreign Library was taken over by the Huddersfield Scientific and Literary Society in 1871 as has been noted in the section covering its library.<sup>205</sup>

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<sup>200</sup> Huddersfield University Archives, FLS/1/1, Huddersfield Foreign Library Society, *Minutes 1851-February 1860*.

<sup>201</sup> John O'Connell, *From Mechanics' Institution to Polytechnic: Further and Higher Education, 1841-1970*, 564.  
See below 5.7.3.

<sup>202</sup> Huddersfield Foreign Library, *Catalogue and Rules of the Huddersfield Foreign Library*. May 1855, 6-15.

<sup>203</sup> Huddersfield University Archives, FLS/1/1, Huddersfield Foreign Library Society *Minutes 1851-February 1860*.

<sup>204</sup> Huddersfield University Archives, FLS/3, Huddersfield Foreign Library Society, *Accounts and Correspondence*.

<sup>205</sup> See above 5.5.4.

### 5.6.4 Huddersfield Law Library

The law library was founded in 1829 at the booksellers Thomas Lancashire's at 17, Market Place. By 1847 the librarians were Bond and Hardy and by 1881 it had been moved to the county court.<sup>206</sup> In 1851 there were 38 solicitors and two other lawyers working in the Huddersfield District, yet the Halifax District with 37 solicitors and eight other lawyers did not have a law library.<sup>207</sup> Leeds also had a law library in 1837 according to White's *Directory* published in that year, but Bradford did not have one.<sup>208</sup> Huddersfield was therefore not unique in having a law library and the absence of similar libraries in Halifax and Bradford suggests a strength in this area.

### 5.6.5 Huddersfield Medical Library

The Huddersfield Medical Library as we have seen in Chapter 3, had been set up in 1814 for qualified medical practitioners.<sup>209</sup> The membership was not high. There were 17 members in 1858, but this had risen to 48 by 1896. Minutes, extant from 1849 include lists of purchases.<sup>210</sup> A 1903 catalogue includes at least 1,500 titles, many of which were multi-volumed.<sup>211</sup>

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<sup>206</sup> William White, *Directory [1847]*, 505.

William White, *White's General and Commercial Directory of Leeds, Bradford and the Clothing District Part II Halifax, Huddersfield*, 14th ed., Sheffield: White; London: Simpkin and Marshall, 1881, 140.

<sup>207</sup> Census of Great Britain 1851, *Population Tables Pt, Ages and Occupations*, Vol. II, 702.

<sup>208</sup> William White, *History, Gazetteer, and Directory, of the West-Riding of Yorkshire [1837]*, Vol. 1, 458, 648.

<sup>209</sup> See above 3.4.

<sup>210</sup> Kirklees District Archives, KC634/1/1, Huddersfield Medical Library, *Minute Book 1849-1926*.

<sup>211</sup> Huddersfield Medical Library, *Rules and Library Catalogue*, Huddersfield: B. Brown, 1903.



### **5.6.6 Conclusion**

Huddersfield was better provided with special libraries than Halifax. It is known to have had a naturalist society library. Halifax had a naturalists' society from 1864, but because of lack of surviving records, the presence or absence of a naturalists' library cannot be confirmed.<sup>212</sup> The Huddersfield Archaeological and Topographical Association became the Yorkshire Archaeological Society. Huddersfield like Leeds had a law library and for a time a foreign language library, but there were no Halifax equivalents. An explanation may be sought in Huddersfield's later economic development perhaps the impetus to form new societies and libraries may have been greater than in the older town of Halifax, proud of its traditions and existing institutions. Halifax may have had less need for special libraries than Huddersfield as it had a larger subscription library especially after it had united with the literary and philosophical society, so books on natural history, history and law books were available to the subscribers, although foreign language works were not held.

## **5.7 MECHANICS' INSTITUTE LIBRARIES**

### **5.7.1 Introduction**

Mechanics' institutes aimed to teach science to working men. They have been referred to in the section on adult education in Chapter 4.<sup>213</sup> Their very name indicates that they were institutes for the working classes. Although they were originally formed to teach science, they were not called scientific institutes, but

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<sup>212</sup> Arthur Porritt, 18th and 19th Century Clubs and Societies in Halifax, 79-80.

<sup>213</sup> See above 4.4.5.



mechanics' institutes thereby emphasising the class for which they were intended, rather than their purpose. As they were important means of working class education in the mid and late nineteenth century, they provided libraries for the working classes. This was even more so as many people would have no access to any other library. Subscription libraries, literary and philosophical society libraries and special libraries had a relatively small middle class membership. The working classes were able to use commercial circulating libraries, but these were only available in larger towns and tended to stock light literature. Church and chapel libraries held religious literature or moralistic fiction or required attendance at worship and adherence to a particular religious denomination. So the absence of suitable educational alternatives further emphasises that the mechanics' institutes and their libraries would have been central to the education and social lives of many working men.

The West Riding was one of the major areas of industrialisation where the application of science to the mechanisation of the textile industry made England a leading manufacturing nation. Mechanics' institutes were so numerous in the West Riding of Yorkshire that they had their own union, the West Riding Union of Mechanics' Institutions from 1837. This became the Yorkshire Union of Mechanics' Institutions in 1841. Surveys described in Chapter 4 and which are further analysed below listed mechanics' institutes such as Halifax and Huddersfield areas and as there was a considerable number, so there were many libraries for the working classes.<sup>214</sup> The larger mechanics' institutes such as Halifax and Huddersfield had a greater variety of classes and lectures and a larger selection of library books, but

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<sup>214</sup> See above 4.4.5.

after a day spent working, there would be little time for mechanics and others to travel to the larger towns in the evening, so smaller towns and villages formed their own institutes. Not every town or village had its subscription library or literary and philosophical society because these were middle class ventures, but mechanics' institutes were popular: they appealed to a wider range of people and like the church or chapel there was enough local support to sustain them in small communities. What Halifax and Huddersfield could do, so could Sowerby Bridge and Meltham. Mechanics' institutes have attracted much attention from historians, for example, the classic study by Mabel Tylecote of *The Mechanics' Institutes of Lancashire and Yorkshire before 1851* published in 1957.<sup>215</sup> Other secondary literature tends to describe individual mechanics' institutes or focus on whether or not they achieved their original aim to teach science to working men rather than the part played by libraries, although some library studies have been carried out. Nevertheless, there is ample information on libraries in secondary works and primary materials in the form of minutes, annual reports and newspaper reports. Libraries were from the start recognised as essential features of mechanics' institutes along with classes and lectures. It was not merely a matter of a few textbooks used in classes or to supplement lectures. In the evidence taken before the Select Committee on Public Libraries in 1849, which was to lead to the Public Libraries Act of 1850, Samuel Smiles (1812-1904), stated:

I find that all those institutions have attached to them libraries; some of them have lectures, and a larger number of the institutions have recently formed classes...Some have mutual improvement classes, but

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<sup>215</sup> Mabel Tylecote, *The Mechanics' Institutes of Lancashire and Yorkshire before 1851*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1957.



all, without exception, have libraries. They find in the libraries a bond of union, as if it were, for the institution that it is necessary to have a library to keep the institution together.<sup>216</sup>

As the aims of mechanics' institutes broadened a wide variety of subjects was taught, so library holdings became more general and fiction was included. When Smiles was asked about the books which were principally read, his reply was:

-Works of fiction; but a taste for a better description of literature is evidently increasing. The number of issues of works on mechanics, philosophy, chemistry, and science, is on the increase, and historical works have been very much read in late years.<sup>217</sup>

Concern was expressed regarding fiction in mechanics' institutes and B.F. Duppa who wrote *Manual for Mechanics' Institutions* for the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge as early as 1839 advised:

...it would be inexpedient, to exclude works of fiction from libraries for working men, yet it should be borne in mind that the unceasing seeking after such reading is very distinct from, and is rarely found in combination with a love of knowledge and a desire of improvement.<sup>218</sup>

According to Figure 5/II statistics taken from the Select Committee on Public Library *Report* show that Halifax Mechanics' Institution had the largest library in the Halifax and Huddersfield areas in 1849. Huddersfield Mechanics' Institution library was smaller despite the membership being at least double that of Halifax. It had 34.61% - over a third of the total membership of these mechanics' institutes, but only 14.43% of the total number of volumes. A possible reason is that Huddersfield Mechanics' Institution had only been formed in 1841, whereas Halifax Mechanics'

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<sup>216</sup> House of Commons, Select Committee on Public Libraries, *Report*, 1849, (HCP548), XVII.1, 124.

<sup>217</sup> House of Commons, Select Committee on Public Libraries, *Report*, 124.

<sup>218</sup> B.F. Duppa, *A Manual for Mechanics' Institutions*, London: Longman, Orme, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1839, 49-50.



Institution had been in existence for 19 years so had had more time to build up a collection. Even smaller institutes held at least 200 volumes demonstrating that small mechanics' institute libraries were important literary sources in smaller towns, perhaps due to the absence of alternatives. So even with a more limited selection of books, many lesser institutes had an active readership.

**FIGURE 5/II LIBRARIES IN MECHANICS' INSTITUTES -HALIFAX  
AND HUDDERSFIELD AREAS. SELECT COMMITTEE  
ON PUBLIC LIBRARIES REPORT 1849**

House of Commons, Select Committee on Public Libraries, *Report, 1849*, (HCP548), XVII.I, Appendix, No. 2 Tabular View of the Institutes Comprised in What is Called the Yorkshire Union of Mechanics' Institutes, 306-9.

Mechanics' Institute	Members and Subscribers	Volumes in Library
Brighouse	104	262
Dogley Lane	70	207
Elland	80	650
Halifax	302	2,400
Holmfirth	108	627
Honley	120	476
Huddersfield	759	1,400
Huddersfield (Female)	278	400
Kirkheaton	46	812
Lockwood	46	279
Marsden	97	867
Netherton	75	250
Sowerby Bridge	108	1,070
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,193</b>	<b>9,700</b>

Average = Members and Subscribers	169
Volumes in Library	746

**FIGURE 5/III LIBRARIES IN MECHANICS' INSTITUTES - HALIFAX  
AREA . J.W. HUDSON 1851**

J.W. Hudson, *The History of Adult Education*, London: Longman, Brown, Green  
and Longmans, 1851, 223-4.

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Average = Members	148
Volumes in Library	934
Issues	3,060

**FIGURE 5/IV LIBRARIES IN MECHANICS' INSTITUTES - HUDDERSFIELD  
AREA. J.W. HUDSON 1851**

J.W. Hudson, *The History of Adult Education*, Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1851, 232-4.

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**FIGURE 5/V LIBRARIES IN MECHANICS' INSTITUTES - HALIFAX AND  
TODMORDEN REGISTRATION DISTRICTS. EDUCATION  
CENSUS 1851**

Census of Great Britain 1851, *Education, Report and Tables*, 1852-3, c.1692, XC.I  
246-8.

**HALIFAX REGISTRATION DISTRICT**

<b>Society</b>	<b>Members</b>	<b>Volumes in Library</b>
Brighthouse MI	135	312
Clifton MI	60	176
Copley Free Library (established by Messrs. Akroyd for the use of their work-people		1,800
Elland MI and Literary Society	87	660
Greetland Mutual Improvement Society	100	400
Halifax Literary and Philosophical Society	160	500
Halifax MI and Mutual Improvement Society	575	3,216
Hartshead MI	100	-
Mixenden MI	66	600
Rastrick MI	47	267
Southowram Mutual Improvement Society	25	125
Sowerby Bridge MI	128	1,100
Woodside Lending Library (Messrs. Akroyd and Sons' workmen or tenants have use of the library)	800	4,500
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,283</b>	<b>13,656</b>

Average = Members                      190  
                         Volumes in Library    1,138

**TODMORDEN REGISTRATION DISTRICT**

<b>Society</b>	<b>Members</b>	<b>Volumes in Library</b>
Cross Stone Church Institution	39	230
Todmorden Athenaeum	39	674
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>904</b>

Average = Members                      39  
                         Volumes in Library    452

**FIGURE 5/VI LIBRARIES IN MECHANICS' INSTITUTES - HUDDERSFIELD  
REGISTRATION DISTRICT. EDUCATION CENSUS 1851**

Census of Great Britain 1851, *Education, Report and Tables*, 1852-53, c.1692.  
XC.I, 247.

Society	Members	Volumes in Library
Austonley Scientific Society	56	676
Dogley Lane MI	60	260
Farnley Tyas	46	158
Holmfirth Church of England Literary Association	95	300
Holmfirth MI	98	663
Holmfirth Wesleyan Literary Society	68	360
Honley MI	120	542
Honley Social Institution	15	93
Huddersfield Mechanics' Institution	810	1,800
Huddersfield Philosophical Society	184	2,000
Jackson Bridge Branch of the Holmfirth MI	24	-
* Kirkburton MI	78	325
* Kirkburton MI	50	116
Kirkburton Wesleyan Literary Society	20	52
Kirkheaton MI	40	800
Lindley MI	104	250
Lockwood MI	84	292
Marsden MI	110	1,450
Meltham MI	151	173
Meltham Mills MI	54	88
Netherthong MI	46	-
Netherton MI	77	300
Shelley MI	36	115
Shelley Mutual Improvement Society	36	140
Shepley MI	22	57
Shepley Church of England Literary Association	27	170
Slaithwaite Mechanics' and Literary Institution	26	226
Thurstonland Improvement Society	65	51
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,602</b>	<b>11,457</b>

\* Two separate societies

Average = Members	93
Volumes in Library	441



Figures 5/III and 5/IV taken from the tables in J.W. Hudson's book on *The History of Adult Education*. This lists 606 institutes of which 151, almost a quarter, were in Yorkshire and 27, a sixth of the Yorkshire Institutes, were in the Halifax and Huddersfield areas.<sup>219</sup> The Huddersfield area was of particular significance: it had not only more mechanics' institute libraries than Halifax, but also more members, more books and the library issue was greater. The lowest issue rate per member was at the Huddersfield Female Educational Institute with only 2.14 per member, perhaps a reflection of the lower educational provision and attainment of women.

Figures 5/V and 5/VI from the 1851 *Education Census* include not only mechanics' institutes, but also other literary and scientific institutes. 1,057 institutes were listed for England and Wales. Of these 155 were in the West Riding of Yorkshire; Lancashire was second with 97 and Middlesex including London was third with 77 - just under half the number for the West Riding. 41 of the 155 West Riding institutes were in the Halifax, Todmorden and Huddersfield Registration Districts. This was a higher number than for most counties. Northumberland, which was fourth on the list, had 43 followed by Staffordshire with 39. Even the Huddersfield Registration District with 28 institutes had more than 31 of the 42 counties listed including the East and North Ridings of Yorkshire, with 17 each.<sup>220</sup> These figures confirm the findings of J.W. Hudson emphasising the importance of mechanics' institutes in the West Riding of Yorkshire especially in the Halifax and

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<sup>219</sup> J.W. Hudson, *The History of Adult Education*, 222-34.

<sup>220</sup> Census of Great Britain 1851, *Education, Report and Tables*, lxx, 247-8.



Huddersfield areas. The tables show that the mechanics' institute libraries were not confined to the main towns, there were several in both the Halifax and Huddersfield areas. There were more in Huddersfield than Halifax.

The considerable number of small institutes make it impossible<sup>to</sup> cover this subject fully and consider each mechanics' institute library individually. Few if any records, survive for many of them. So three mechanics' institution libraries will be considered: those of the Halifax Mechanics' Institution, the Huddersfield Mechanics' Institution, which are the two major ones for the area and the Huddersfield Female Educational Institute Library, all of which are relatively well-documented.

### 5.7.2 Halifax Mechanics' Institution Library

The Halifax Mechanics' Institution was formed on the initiative of a mechanic, Joseph Baldwin, in 1825. Steps were taken from the start to set up a library. 30 titles mainly books were ordered, but also the *Mechanics' Magazine* and *Glasgow Mechanics' Magazine*. All were scientific and technical works. The institution did not fare well in its early years due to the economic depression of the late 1820s and it was reorganised in 1830 with middle class support. In 1849 it joined with a newer organisation, the Halifax Mutual Improvement Society. Minute books are extant for most of its existence and a secondary article described its history until its removal to its own building in 1857.<sup>221</sup>

From the start the library flourished. By January 1833 there were over 500 volumes and it was advertised as:

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<sup>221</sup> Linda J. Parr, *The Library of the Halifax Mechanics' Institution 1825-1857*.

a Library, comprising upwards of 500 Volumes, on the Arts and Sciences, History, Biography, Voyages and Travels, and General Literature...<sup>222</sup>

From 1832 there was a separate reading room for current journals and in 1834 the number of books had increased by such a degree that the library was enlarged by the addition of an adjoining room. According to the report for December 1833 to October 1834 a further 350 volumes were added to the library, by which time it numbered nearly 1,100 volumes. The issues were over 5,400 a year or 140 a week.<sup>223</sup> The library was well used from the start. The minutes show lists of purchases with some donations, mainly from the directors and particularly from the Reverend William Turner. He was a director or vice-president during much of his ministry at Northgate End Unitarian Chapel, Halifax 1828-53. As we have seen he also served on the committees of the Halifax Circulating Library and was an author.<sup>224</sup> The institution clearly flourished after its re-organisation. By 1840 it was the largest of the 10 institutes in the West-Riding Union of Mechanics' Institutes formed in 1837. The library had 1,975 volumes and 10,872 issues 1840-1 even more than Leeds.<sup>225</sup> However, by 1846 it had been unable to sustain its premier position. The library was fourth of 48 in the Yorkshire Union of Mechanics' Institutes, one of the largest, but it had been overtaken by Leeds, Bradford and Wakefield.<sup>226</sup> By 1849 it was fifth in the Yorkshire Union list in the report of the Select Committee on

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<sup>222</sup> Calderdale District Archives, HMI:1, Halifax Mechanics' Institution, *Minute Book 1825-39*.

<sup>223</sup> Calderdale District Archives, HMI:1, Halifax Mechanics' Institution, *Minute Book 1825-39*

<sup>224</sup> See above 5.1.2 and 5.4.1.

<sup>225</sup> West-Riding Union of Mechanics' Institutes, *Annual Report 1840*.

<sup>226</sup> Yorkshire Union of Mechanics' Institutes, *Annual Report 1846*.

Public Libraries.<sup>227</sup> Nevertheless, despite the relative decline the earliest catalogue dating from 1851 lists 3,441 volumes. The subject categories were as follows:

A	Science	323
B	Literature	749
C	Philosophy	161
D	History, Biography, Antiquity	638
E	Education	156
F	Fine Arts	52
G	Theology	71
H	Natural History	139
I	General Works	1,194
J	Juvenile	73
TOTAL		3,556 <sup>228</sup>

Subjects such as literature, history and voyages and travels included in the general section were the largest categories in common with most general libraries at that time. Yet some scientific works were held; there were 323 science books including astronomy, chemistry, physiology, geology, mechanics and mathematics. The Halifax Mechanics' Institution completed a questionnaire, which was sent out in 1853 by the Society of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce. One of the questions related to library issues. Most books could be borrowed. The return was an estimate only, but the subject division was:

A	Theology	600
B	History and Biography	1,340
C	Voyages and Travels	1,200
D	Philosophy and Education	960
E	Political and Statistical	240
F	Poetry and Drama	720
G	Literature and Fine Arts	960
H	Arts (not Fine Arts), Sciences and Manufactures	1,080

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<sup>227</sup> House of Commons, Select Committee on Public Libraries, *Report*, Appendix 2, 306-9.

<sup>228</sup> Halifax Mechanics' Institution and Mutual Improvement Society, *Alphabetical and Classified Catalogue of the Library [1851]*, Halifax: Burrows, 1851.



I	Fiction	2,980
K	Periodicals	4,000
L	Miscellaneous	1,920
TOTAL		16,000 <sup>229</sup>

The Mechanics' Institution was educational in purpose, so the library at this time was mainly for education rather than entertainment. Recreational reading was not dominant, as fiction comprised only 2,980 of 16,000 issues. Some of the members of the Mechanics' Institute would have been barely literate, so may have been using the fiction for reading practice. The issue of 1,080 works on arts, sciences and manufactures illustrates the importance of teaching science to working men. The library included a wide range of subjects with history, biography, voyages and travels and periodicals featuring strongly both in the 1851 catalogue and the issue. There were 600 issues on theology even though it was a secular institution, reflecting the importance of religion and church attendance in many people's lives.

Library activities were extended when a newsroom was added in 1850 and later a juvenile library was established. As many as 239 of the membership of 790 in 1853 were youths under 18.<sup>230</sup> Juvenile books had been purchased for the library since the early 1830s and 70 titles were listed in the 1851 catalogue.<sup>231</sup> In 1854 a juvenile library was set up in the Great Albion Street School, which has been referred to in the section on school libraries. This may have been the same as the

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<sup>229</sup> Calderdale District Archives, HMI:2 Halifax Mechanics' Institution, *Minute Book* 1847-54.

<sup>230</sup> Calderdale District Archives, HMI:2, Halifax Mechanics' Institution, *Minute Book* 1847-54.

<sup>231</sup> Halifax Mechanics' Institution, *Catalogue [1851]*, 93-5.

school library.<sup>232</sup> The membership of the Mechanics' Institution was not exclusively male. Women were members and the Halifax Female Mutual Instruction Society became a branch of the Institution in 1850. 36 books were ordered for the female branch in 1855.

By the 1850s the trend in the main library was towards lighter literature. More popular works were being purchased for the library. In an advertisement in 1854:

THE LIBRARY, which contains nearly 4,000 volumes, has of late received considerable additions, comprising works by Dickens, Bulwer, D'Israeli, Beecher Stowe, Wetherell, Balfour, etc.<sup>233</sup>

The Mechanics' Institution had three earlier locations, but it occupied its own mechanics' hall from 1857. By this time any attempts of making the library for education only had been abandoned. In the annual report for 1865:

The directors have done what they could to make the library educational and as entertaining as funds would allow;...They have also subscribed to Messrs. Smith's and Son's Library...<sup>234</sup>

Thus the library supplied both a means of both education and entertainment. The latter function was to become paramount. In October 1866 it was agreed to buy novels:

That the Library Committee be empowered to purchase some of the best class of novels as they appear in the published catalogues at a reduced price.<sup>235</sup>

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<sup>232</sup> See above 5.3.

<sup>233</sup> Calderdale District Archives, HMI:3, Halifax Mechanics' Institution, *Minute Book* 1854-9.

<sup>234</sup> Calderdale District Archives, HMI:4, Halifax Mechanics' Institution, *Minute Book* 1859-71

<sup>235</sup> Calderdale District Archives, HMI:4, Halifax Mechanics' Institution, *Minute Book* 1859-71.

Alphabetical catalogues were published in 1868 and 1883 and they covered a wide range of subjects.<sup>236</sup> As time went on fiction was more in demand and the library followed the same pattern as subscription libraries in that lighter literature was predominant. In short, however, the library of the Halifax Mechanics' Institution was significant for working men and to a lesser extent women, as it may have been their only source of educational reading and would have had a considerable impact on working class education especially in its early years.

### **5.7.3 Huddersfield Mechanics' Institution Library**

The Huddersfield Mechanics' Institution was founded in 1841, which was relatively late for this type of institution. It originated as a mutual improvement society founded by five young men employed by Frederic Schwann. Schwann, its first president, also played an important part in the formation of the Huddersfield Foreign Library Society.<sup>237</sup> The Huddersfield Mechanics' Institution was widely praised as noted in the educational background section in Chapter 4 and had a successful start.<sup>238</sup> It was fortunate in its secretaries: George Searle Phillips, the educationalist and writer, serving from 1846 to 1854, some of whose works are noted in the section on bookselling and printing earlier in this chapter, and his successor until 1862, Frank Curzon.<sup>239</sup> Both became lecturer and agent to the Yorkshire Union of Mechanics' Institutes after leaving Huddersfield. Phillips visited the homes of absent

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<sup>236</sup> Halifax Mechanics' Institution, *Alphabetical Catalogue [1868]*, Halifax: Birtwhistle, 1868.  
Halifax Mechanics' Institution, *Catalogue [1883]*, Halifax Whitley and Booth, 1883.

<sup>237</sup> See above 5.6.3.

<sup>238</sup> See above 4.4.5.

<sup>239</sup> See above 5.1.3.



students to maintain and increase membership, reorganised classes and fees and advertised the institute nationally through his writings. He compiled statistics of student achievements and institutional progress.<sup>240</sup> This interest in documentation is perhaps reflected in the survival of the records of the institution in the form of minutes and annual reports.

As a writer and advocate of public libraries, he was obviously interested in books and he wrote:

Books are the largest educators, when we have said all we can for our schools and universities. I would have the home of every man, therefore, made sacred by the presence of these venerable worthies, whose names are the glories of literature and the pride of Christendom.<sup>241</sup>

Frank Curzon was the son of an Exeter bookseller. He wrote briefly of his time in Huddersfield in his autobiography when the mechanics' institution became the biggest night school in England with 50 paid teachers and 1,200 students. The members increased from 500 to 1,650 and the annual subscribers from 100 to 350.<sup>242</sup> Such a sizeable and well known institute organised for over 16 years (1846-62) by George Phillips, an author and Frank Curzon, son of a bookseller, might be expected to have had a library, which would also be outstanding and set an example for others to emulate. In reality, this was not so. George Phillips was an author, but his interest was in increasing the membership. Frank Curzon referred to the library of the Leeds Mechanics' Institute and the Yorkshire Village Library in his reminiscences, but not to the library of the Huddersfield Mechanics' Institution. They built up the number

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<sup>240</sup> John O'Connell, *From Mechanics' Institution to Polytechnic: Further and Higher Education 1841-1970*, 564-6.

<sup>241</sup> Mabel Phythian (Tylecote), *January Searle in Yorkshire*, 148.

<sup>242</sup> Frank Curzon, *Reminiscences of My Life Work*, Leeds: Spark, 1904, 31-2.

of members rather than the number of books in the library, which increased at a slower rate. Potential members were attracted to the classes rather than the library and it had to meet the requirements of a membership, which had expanded rapidly. The library was open at extra charge to members and non-members alike. The extra charge was abolished for members in 1843, because in practice many could not afford it. The library had difficulty in meeting the demands placed upon it. By January 1844 the number of volumes held in the library had reached 453. The report continued:

...the number of volumes compared with the number of members is not sufficient for as extensive an exchange as is desirable yet your committee prefer struggling with this difficulty rather than entail any debt upon the Institution...<sup>243</sup>

A hope was expressed for more donations. Three years later there was continuing pressure on the library and its services: over 500 readers attended the library and its committee:

It has also been gratifying to us, to see the animation that exists amongst the members, on the nights the library is open; finding work for three and sometimes four persons to attend to them. It is no unusual occurrence to see twenty of the juvenile members, calling out the number of the volume they want at one time...<sup>244</sup>

The system of closed access prevalent in libraries at this time would make it more time-consuming to issue books to readers and would put further pressure on the library and librarians. There were both paid and honorary librarians. The demands

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<sup>243</sup> Huddersfield University, HMI/1/1, Huddersfield Mechanics' Institution, *General Committee Minutes 1843-4, Annual Reports 1847-8*.

<sup>244</sup> Huddersfield University, HMI/1/1, Huddersfield Mechanics' Institution, *General Committee Minutes 1843-4, Annual Reports 1847-8*.

made on the library meant that more than one person was required at the busiest times. With regard to adults:

....when a selection of from five to six hundred volumes is made, and the volumes entered are in regular circulation, very few usually useful works are left on the shelves...the call for extension of this department, is as loud and as urgent as ever...<sup>245</sup>

The library's popularity was welcomed by the committee of the institution, which viewed the demand for books as a sign of educational success and the need for more resources to cope with the demand was also recognised. This clearly illustrates the great interest in education among the working classes of Huddersfield and their eagerness not only for classes, but also for reading.

In 1846 the library held 900 volumes, but of the 48 institutes in the Yorkshire Union of Mechanics' Institutes, the Huddersfield Mechanics' Institution was only joint fourteenth in terms of volumes; even the library of the Sowerby Bridge Mechanics' Institution had more volumes. Although joint fourteenth in terms of volumes, Huddersfield with £367 was second in terms of income to Leeds with £742 suggesting that an insufficient proportion of monies received were being spent on books.<sup>246</sup> In 1849 according to the report of the Select Committee on Public Libraries, it was still only tenth of 85 in Yorkshire.<sup>247</sup> By 1855 it seemed that demand was still outpacing supply as:

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<sup>245</sup> Huddersfield University, HMI/1/1, Huddersfield Mechanics' Institution, *General Committee Minutes 1843-4, Annual Reports 1847-8*.

<sup>246</sup> Yorkshire Union of Mechanics' Institutes, *Annual Report 1846*.

<sup>247</sup> House of Commons, Select Committee on Public Libraries, *Report*, Appendix 2, 306-9.



More books are greatly wanted, especially in the juvenile department, the boys having in fair, honest use completely worn out a large proportion of the volumes circulating amongst them.<sup>248</sup>

A separate library fund was set up to improve the situation and 26 people gave a total of £9.13s.6d. Such was the renown of the mechanics' institution that one of the book donations, *The Natural History of Dee Side*, came from Prince Albert. He also donated £25 for book prizes. The institution not only had Prince Albert as a benefactor, but also Sir Robert Peel (1822-95), son of Sir Robert Peel, the statesman.<sup>249</sup> In 1856 among many self-congratulatory speeches made at the annual soirée he said:

I have not had the opportunity of looking at the catalogue of books, or of seeing what directions the tastes of the artisans and mechanics in this institution takes; but I see that the issue of books is great, and books are wanting.<sup>250</sup>

He gave £100 in four £25 annual instalments from 1857 to remedy the situation.<sup>251</sup> In December 1860 the library was re-arranged in four departments: the general library, the juvenile library, the periodical library and the Peel library. The institution also benefited from the sale of the Huddersfield Philosophical Society Library in 1857, when representatives attended the auction and purchased about 39 titles comprising over 80 volumes.<sup>252</sup> Despite the liberality of the donors and the augmentation of the library, a special committee was set up to report on the state of

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<sup>248</sup> Huddersfield University, HMI/1/5, Huddersfield Mechanics' Institution, *General Committee Minutes 1854-6, Annual Reports 1855-6*.

<sup>249</sup> Huddersfield University Archives, HMI/1/5, Huddersfield Mechanics' Institution, *General Committee Minutes 1854-6, Annual Reports 1855-6*.

<sup>250</sup> Huddersfield Mechanics' Institution. Thursdays' Meeting, The Annual Soiree, *Huddersfield Chronicle*, 350, 29 November 1856, 7.

<sup>251</sup> Huddersfield University Archives, HMI/1/8, Huddersfield Mechanics' Institution, *General Committee Minutes 1859-60, Annual Report 1859*.

<sup>252</sup> Huddersfield University Archives, HMI/1/6, Huddersfield Mechanics' Institution, *General Committee Minutes, Annual Reports 1856-7*.

the library. According to its report in January 1861, the books were categorised as follows:

Books	in moderate condition	2,224
	which want binding or repairing	191
	at the Binders	67
	used up	52
	of which there is no account	212
	which have been out too long	38
TOTAL		2,784 <sup>253</sup>

So 250 books - almost 9% of the total were overdue or missing. Most of the books were in moderate condition, but of these:

A great number...had loose leaves...Others are rather dirty, and, in many cases, leaves are missing at the beginning or end of the volumes, but we do not think it advisable to throw them away as "used up" for although an eyesore, and it might be thought by some a disgrace to a respectable library, yet a little more service should be secured from them...

There are also included the Books in the Reading Room, which we should advise the Committee to remove as they are in a sad condition, covered with dust and so shamefully injured that they are a disgrace to the Institution...<sup>254</sup>

The damage to the books provides direct evidence that usage of the library was high. The poor state of books, was not always due to their having been read many times, there may also have been lack of care. Parley's *Tales* was missing believed to be worn out:

We believe that if Parley's *Tales* were obtained in thinner volumes than the original copies, they would better withstand the rough usage of the younger members.<sup>255</sup>

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<sup>253</sup> Huddersfield University Archives, HMI/1/9, Huddersfield Mechanics' Institution, *General Committee Minutes 1860-1, Annual Report 1861*.

<sup>254</sup> Huddersfield University Archives, HMI/1/9, Huddersfield Mechanics' Institution, *General Committee Minutes 1860-1, Annual Report 1861*.

<sup>255</sup> Huddersfield University Archives, HMI/1/9, Huddersfield Mechanics' Institution, *General Committee Minutes 1860-1, Annual Report 1861*.



One illustration of the difficulty of coping with demand even in 1870 was when a member, Thomas Harrison, complained of the evening opening time of 7.00. He suggested that the time should be changed to 6.30 as he was generally engaged after 7.30 and even if he came to the library at 7.00, he said he was not always served on time. He was not the only person to be inconvenienced, he knew some persons who had left the institution because of it.<sup>256</sup>

In 1870 the library was augmented and issues were 11,140 and the annual report stated:

Next to the classes, the library is considered the most important feature of the Institution...<sup>257</sup>

The vital role of the library was also stressed later, in 1882 when the committee reported that the purpose of the institution had always been educational firstly and social only secondly and that:

....class instruction has ever been the chief object of the directors...The library and Reading Room are important adjuncts, and afford willing students ample scope for supplementing the work of the classes.<sup>258</sup>

Several catalogues of the collection were published. The 1861 catalogue is divided by subject as follows:

History	147
Biography	156
Chemistry	37
Geology, Mineralogy and Physiology	41
Machinery and Manufactures	22
Mechanics and Mathematics	13
Painting and the Fine Arts	52

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<sup>256</sup> Huddersfield University Archives, HMI/1/14, Huddersfield Mechanics' Institution, *General Committee Minutes 1870-2*, 180-2.

<sup>257</sup> Huddersfield Mechanics' Institution, *Huddersfield Chronicle*, 1,080, 24 December 1870, 6.

<sup>258</sup> Huddersfield Mechanics' Institution, Annual Report, *Huddersfield Chronicle*, 4,519, 27 January 1882, 4.



Natural Philosophy	37
Natural History, Botany, etc.	44
Theology and Morals	75
Education	42
Essays and General Literature	191
Voyages and Travels	152
Tales, Poetry and the Drama	247
Periodicals and Reviews	42
Juvenile Library	326
Peel Library	264
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,888<sup>259</sup></b>

The numbers relate to the titles, not the number of volumes. The number is fewer than might be expected for an institution, which had been in existence for 20 years. With the exception of the juvenile library and the Peel Library, the largest section is tales, poetry and drama followed by essays and general literature, biography, voyages and travels and history which follow the pattern of most general libraries. As in Halifax, the Mechanics' Institution, a secular body, held theological works in its library with 75 titles. 37 titles on chemistry were also included, reflecting the importance of this subject in the local economy.

To sum up: There is evidence throughout the course of the history of Huddersfield Mechanics' Institution library to suggest that the library was heavily used and it was not always able to meet the demands made on it. Interest in reading and using the library to this extent is a sign of the success of efforts made in recruitment of members and the effectiveness of the teaching. Whatever the shortcomings of the library, working men and youths were eager to benefit from it.

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<sup>259</sup> Huddersfield Mechanics' Institution, *Catalogue of the Library of the Huddersfield Mechanics' Institution*, Huddersfield: J. Crossley, 1861.

#### 5.7.4 Huddersfield Female Educational Institute Library

The Huddersfield Female Educational Institute was the only institute in Huddersfield with an all-female membership and provides ample evidence that working women as well as men were receiving at least a basic education. Samuel Kell who was also to establish the Bradford Female Educational Institute in 1857, formed it in 1847.<sup>260</sup> All-female institutes of this kind were rare, but the Huddersfield Mechanics' Institution with which it was linked, had been tardy in recognising the educational needs of working class women, so a separate institute was set up. Halifax did not have an equivalent female institution, but it had a female branch in the form of the Halifax Female Mutual Instruction Society, which had joined with the Mechanics' Institution in 1850. The Huddersfield Female Educational Institute survived as an independent organisation for 36 years before being taken over by the Mechanics' Institution in 1883. Extant reports and minutes date only from 1856, but according to the Select Committee on Public Libraries there were 400 volumes in the library in 1849 and J.W. Hudson claimed that there were 500 volumes in 1851.<sup>261</sup> It grew only slowly, however. In 1857 books bought at the sale of the library of the Huddersfield Philosophical Society were added.<sup>262</sup> In 1858 there were still only 572 volumes. Seven years later the report of 1866 read:

The library contains - as it has done for many years - 600 volumes. Excepting a few books presented by kind friends, there have been no additions for some time ...<sup>263</sup>

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<sup>260</sup> June Purvis, *Hard Lessons. The Lives and Education of Working-Class Women in Nineteenth-century England*, Cambridge: Polity, 1989, 104.

<sup>261</sup> See above Figures 5/II and 5/IV.

<sup>262</sup> Huddersfield University Archives, FEI/1/1, Huddersfield Female Educational Institute, *Minutes 1856-64*.

<sup>263</sup> Huddersfield University Archives, FEI/3/9, Huddersfield Female Educational Institute, *Annual Report 1866*, 5.

The annual issue April 1865-March 1866 was 749, under six per member, although it had declined from 1,000-1,400 in previous years.<sup>264</sup> By 1870 it had risen to 1,436.<sup>265</sup> In 1878-9 50 volumes were added so that the total number was over 900.<sup>266</sup> In the following year a grant from Rebecca Hussey's book charity enabled another 80 volumes to be added.<sup>267</sup> Despite the additional books, issue registers show that the number was down to 566 in 1882.<sup>268</sup>

After the re-classification of 1857 the books were arranged in the following subject categories:

A	Philosophy, Education, Morals	37
B	Science with Applications	16
C	Natural History	23
D	History, Antiquities	73
E	Biography	52
F	Geography, Voyages and Travels	68
G	Social Economy, Statistics	31
H	Stories, Fiction	126
I	General Literature, Fine Arts	119
O	Poetry, Drama	27
TOTAL		572 <sup>269</sup>

Fiction, stories, general literature and fine arts make up 245 of the total number of volumes and other large categories are history and antiquities with 73 volumes and

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<sup>264</sup> Huddersfield University Archives, FEI/3/9, Huddersfield Female Educational Institute, *Annual Report 1866*, 5.

<sup>265</sup> Huddersfield University Archives, FEI/3/11, Huddersfield Female Educational Institute, *Annual Report 1870*, 7.

<sup>266</sup> Huddersfield University Archives, FEI/3/17, Huddersfield Female Educational Institute, *Annual Report 1879*, 5.

<sup>267</sup> Huddersfield University Archives, FEI/3/18, Huddersfield Female Educational Institute, *Annual Report 1880*, 5.

<sup>268</sup> Huddersfield University Archives, FEI/9/3, Huddersfield Female Educational Institute, *Issue Book 1873-83*.

<sup>269</sup> Huddersfield University Archives, FEI/3/1, Huddersfield Female Educational Institute, *Annual Report 1858*, 5.



geography voyages and travels with 68. There were only 16 books on applied science, although even their inclusion is unexpected as the original aim of mechanics' institutes was to teach science to working men, not working women.

The library was far smaller than that of the Huddersfield Mechanics' Institution and there was only one voluntary librarian supported by a library committee. The issues tended to fluctuate; it was not a matter of a slow and steady increase. The purchasing of new class books appears frequently in the minutes and is covered in the annual reports and this emphasis reflects the lower literacy and educational levels of girls and women who needed to receive a basic education before reading more widely. The Female Institute and its library were overshadowed by their male counterparts and any attempt to compare them would highlight the disparity between educational and library provision for men and women. J.W. Hudson included the Huddersfield Female Educational Institute on his list in 1851. In the Huddersfield area of the 17 institutes for which figures survive, its library was seventh in terms of size with 500 volumes, whereas the Huddersfield Mechanics' Institution was second with 1,800.

In terms of issues, however, with 300 it was only sixteenth of 17 and had the lowest number of loans per member than any Huddersfield institute. In contrast, the corresponding figures for the Huddersfield Mechanics' Institution was 14,000 issues: over 46 times as many.<sup>270</sup> Women and girls would have had less time to read due to their domestic duties. The Huddersfield Female Educational Institute was more akin

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<sup>270</sup> See above Figure 5/IV.

to a mechanics' institute in a small town or village yet its very existence provides some evidence of the educational achievements of working women.

## 5.8 FACTORY LIBRARIES

### 5.8.1 Introduction

From around the mid-nineteenth century some employers provided factory libraries for education and recreation. Industrial libraries supplying technical information were a later development. Factory libraries were part of the wider cultural and social provision made by employers in areas such as housing and education. Halifax was notable for its factory libraries provided by major employers: Edward Akroyd and the Crossleys whose work was outlined in Chapter 4.<sup>271</sup> As they were the largest employers in Halifax, the potential readership of their factory libraries was high. Women who were numerous in the textile industries would benefit as well as men. As the libraries were located at or near the place of work, they could be used outside work hours without the need to travel long distances. At the July 1881 monthly meeting of the Library Association G.R. Humphrey gave a paper on factory libraries, but he only identified five libraries: J. Broadwood of Westminster, J. Penn of Greenwich, Huntley and Palmer of Reading, F. Braby of Deptford and Tangye Brothers of Birmingham. They ranged in size from 600 to 5,500 volumes. He did not include any Halifax libraries.<sup>272</sup> Margaret Marshall, however, in her work on the history of industrial libraries, particularly in Yorkshire, highlighted the 'Akroyd' and

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<sup>271</sup> See above 4.2.5.

<sup>272</sup> G.R. Humphrey, On Workmen's, or Factory, Libraries, *Monthly Notes of the Library Association of the United Kingdom*, 2(7), 15 July 1881, 54, 58.

Dean Clough libraries in Halifax as examples of early works' libraries.<sup>273</sup> Halifax therefore seems to have had some of the earliest factory libraries available to a workforce numbering thousands, both men and women.

### 5.8.2 'Akroyd Libraries'

According to the 1851 *Education Census* there were two works' libraries in the Halifax Registration District: the Copley Free Library and the Woodside Library. There were 1,800 volumes at Copley, but the library had only recently been established, so membership figures were not given. There were as many as 4,500 volumes at the Woodside Library and 800 members including 450 women. These two libraries were the only libraries of this type listed in the 154 educational institutes in the West Riding of Yorkshire.<sup>274</sup> The Copley Library was free of charge to its members, but in 1863 after some improvements were made, a charge was imposed and the number of readers declined from 200 to 30. By this time the number of volumes in the library was 1,742. The Woodside Library was relatively large, but was little used by those for whom it was intended partly because of the unattractive nature of the books and partly because of the very easy terms on which use was granted.<sup>275</sup> Level of education may have also played a part, as not all workers, particularly women, would be able to read. Edward Akroyd and Halifax are significant in the history of factory libraries, yet the libraries were little used by the workforce. In 1856 the library was reorganised and moved into the schoolroom

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<sup>273</sup> Margaret R. Marshall, Libraries in Yorkshire Industry, *Library History*, 1(5), Spring 1969, 165-6.

Margaret R. Marshall, *The History of Industrial Libraries in Britain to 1960*, 82-3.

<sup>274</sup> Census of Great Britain 1851, *Education, Report and Tables*, 245-50.

<sup>275</sup> Edward Green, *Local Libraries: their Origin and Progress*, 83.



of the Haley Hill Working Men's College, which had opened in 1855. Its use was extended to those living within the newly created Haley Hill parish, so strictly speaking, it was no longer a works' library and only by a change of designation from factory to college library did it become widely used. Mr. Anderson, headmaster of the Haley Hill schools, had overhauled the library, by which time it held nearly 4,000 books.<sup>276</sup> In 1864 there were over 300 members and an issue of 5,335 and despite the diversity of subjects, most of the loans were on lighter literature. There was a juvenile library of 1,200 books, which was extensively used.<sup>277</sup> A further library existed under the patronage of Edward Akroyd. He supplied a library of music to the Haley Hill Choral Society.<sup>278</sup> James J. Aves, one of the founders of the Haley Hill Literary and Scientific Society, wrote in an article in 1901 about the Haley Hill Library, which at the time of its demise in 1879 had 6,000 volumes. He wrote:

Many young men never got so far as the College after the Reading Room was opened. A game of dominoes, a smoke and a chat, a pork pie and a cup of coffee, were too great attractions...in 1879 all was over - Reading Room, Library, Museum etc., School, Working Men's College, and every educational effort of the dear Colonel's had fallen like a pack of cards.<sup>279</sup>

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<sup>276</sup> Haley Hill Library and Reading Rooms, *Halifax Courier*, 4(157), 5 January 1856, 4.

<sup>277</sup> Edward Green, *Local Libraries: their Origin and Progress*, 83.

<sup>278</sup> Rowland Bretton, Colonel Edward Akroyd, 11.

<sup>279</sup> James J. Aves, The Haley Hill Literary and Scientific Society, *The Halifax Naturalist*, 6(34), October 1901, 91.

Some books were sold to James Crossley who was a bookseller in Union Street, Halifax, some were given to Copley library and others were given away.<sup>280</sup>

### 5.8.3 Dean Clough Library

The Crossleys of Dean Clough, the important local family of industrialists and benefactors of Halifax, also had a works' library. The date of the opening of the Dean Clough Institute has been given as 1872.<sup>281</sup> It had a library which was therefore part of an educational institute, similar to a mechanics' institute, like Edward Akroyd's Woodside library, which became part of the Haley Hill Working Men's College. With the educational link, the libraries were college rather than factory libraries. The Dean Clough library, however, pre-dated the institute. A library was formed as early as 1859. There is evidence that John Crossley wrote to Edward Edwards, Librarian of Manchester Public Library 1850-8, for advice on setting up the library. James Crossley, a relation of John, was a member of the Manchester Public Libraries Committee, which suggests links with Edwards.<sup>282</sup> Minutes of Dean Clough Library survive from March 1859 to March 1865. The library was run by a committee with a paid librarian. The minutes are concerned with matters such as the problem of overdue books, damage to books by readers and the behaviour of the librarians. They reveal conflicts and problems. The word 'complaint' appears frequently. There were five librarians in six years. The first librarian from April 1859 was Mr. Crossley. In February 1860 the library committee

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<sup>280</sup> James J. Aves, *The Haley Hill Literary and Scientific Society*, 89, 91.

<sup>281</sup> Rowland Bretton, *Crossleys of Dean Clough Part II*, *Transactions of the Halifax Antiquarian Society*, 1951, 73.

<sup>282</sup> Margaret R. Marshall, *Libraries in Yorkshire Industry*, 165.

discussed his neglect of duty and considered dismissing him. In March 1861 the minutes read:

The advisability of dismissing the Librarian was further considered, and it was decided to let the matter rest until the compilation of a catalogue had been effected.<sup>283</sup>

However, he resigned shortly afterwards. Mr. Saville and Mr. Holdsworth were then appointed as librarians. It was not long before there were complaints about them. In June 1861 the secretary complained of the incivility of the librarians. In May 1862 one of the librarians, Mr. Savile, complained about his colleague Mr. Holdsworth's neglect of duty and general disinclination to perform his share of the work. In the same month Mr. Holdsworth resigned and Mr. Saville took entire responsibility for the library. In October 1863 the committee again complained of the librarian, objecting to "his practice of smoking at the door while members are kept waiting to exchange their books." At the meeting 1 February 1864 complaints had been made on the librarian's "acerbity of disposition" and 15 February he was requested to resign. Mr. Copeland was then librarian until December 1864 when he was replaced by Mr. Rawson. The library therefore was either unfortunate in its librarians or perhaps they found it difficult to match the rulings of the committee with the demands of the readers.

If the readers complained about the librarians, the reverse was also true. Mr. Rawson reported to the committee 30 December 1864:

that Mr Noble when remonstrated with for keeping his book so much over the proper time, had been very insolent.<sup>284</sup>

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<sup>283</sup> Calderdale District Archives, DC:1656, Dean Clough, *Library Committee Minutes 1859-65*.

<sup>284</sup> Calderdale District Archives, DC:1656, Dean Clough, *Library Committee Minutes 1859-65*.



Mr. Noble was suspended from use of the library, but only for three months as he had apologised for his behaviour. The committee did not always support the librarian, for example, at the 24 September 1862 meeting Mr. Saville, the librarian, complained that several persons had exceeded the time allowed for loan of books, but the committee was of the opinion that by the exercise of a little more vigilance on the part of the librarian, such cases might be prevented.<sup>285</sup>

Internal management problems affected the smooth running of the library, although some readers complained, many would be unaware of the difficulties and the library continued to be a source of education and entertainment. The minutes particularly when outlining the succession of <sup>librarians</sup> provide ample illustration of the problems in library administration.

The minutes therefore present a different picture from that of a paternalistic management and grateful readers. The appointment of five librarians in six years and the subsequent dismissal or resignation of four of them and readers' complaints do not conform to this idealised view. Rather than showing how a works' library differed from other types of library, as might be expected, the minutes provide a classic example of library administration

Both the Woodside and Dean Clough libraries were works' libraries, which became college libraries. The Dean Clough Library minutes note that admission was allowed to all those officially connected with the works. In October 1861 it was extended to include the servants of Messrs. Crossley. There was a reference library, circulating library and a reading room. Lists of journals and books for purchase

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<sup>285</sup> Calderdale District Archives, DC:1656, Dean Clough, *Library Committee Minutes 1859-65*.

appear in the minutes. Purchase of popular novels was made, for example, such as 19 October 1863, Longfellow's Poems and Mrs. Henry Wood's *The Channings* and *Mrs. Halliburton's Troubles*.<sup>286</sup> A later supplementary catalogue issued in 1877 comprised volumes as follows:

Religion and Philosophy	65
History	32
Biography	75
Science and Art	38
Natural History	5
Topography and Travels	56
Fiction	582
Poetry	22
Miscellaneous	118
Magazines	234
Annuals	16
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,243<sup>287</sup></b>

Books on religion, philosophy, science and art were included, but clearly the main function of the library was entertainment with 582 fiction books and in addition there were 234 magazines.

## 5.9 COMMERCIAL CIRCULATING LIBRARIES

The earlier history of commercial libraries has been covered in Chapter 3.<sup>288</sup> By the second part of this study from around 1830 the number of circulating libraries had increased, as had the number of bookshops as noted in the section on the book trade at the beginning of this chapter.<sup>289</sup> No membership records survive, but commercial circulating libraries would have been used by those who were not members of other

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<sup>286</sup> Calderdale District Archives, DC:1656, Dean Clough, Library Committee Minutes 1859-65.

<sup>287</sup> Dean Clough Institute, *Supplement to Catalogue of the Library, November, 1877*, Halifax: Birtwhistle, 1877.

<sup>288</sup> See above 3.6.

<sup>289</sup> See above 5.1.

libraries: mainly the working classes and women. They may have been excluded from other libraries because they could not pay the subscription or they may not have wished to join a particular society, mechanics' institute or religious denomination for the sake of the library. Many readers wanted light literature, and Halifax was the town of William Milner, the popular bookseller and publisher. Even those with access to other libraries may not have found any light literature or it may have been insufficient to meet demands. Commercial circulating libraries usually aimed to meet local demand, but some libraries provided literature on a national scale notably Mudie's and to a lesser extent W.H. Smith's. The fact that general circulating libraries were less educational in purpose and existed more to provide entertainment and were not well-documented should not detract from their importance. Many libraries later in the century, as in the case, for example, of the library of the Halifax Literary and Philosophical Society, had to resort to subscribing to Mudie's: a commercial circulating library, to procure lighter literature.<sup>290</sup> The Huddersfield Church Institute Library subscribed to Mudie's and Smith's.<sup>291</sup> Commercial circulating libraries can be identified from directories and newspaper advertisements. Doubtless there were other similar libraries. Figure 5/VII taken from White's directories shows 12 commercial circulating libraries in Halifax in the period 1837-66, but they were not all in business at the same time. In practice the number would be lower because businesses were sold and traded under different names. Mary McArthur took over her husband John McArthur's business on his

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<sup>290</sup> See above 5.5.2.

<sup>291</sup> See below 6.1.5.



death in 1848 and Caroline Wood and Ann Midgley shared the same address and possibly the same library. Women were proprietors of commercial circulating libraries. They may have been widows carrying on their husband's businesses, or run them because this type of library had many women readers.

#### FIGURE 5/VII COMMERCIAL CIRCULATING LIBRARIES 1837-66 - HALIFAX

William White, *History, Gazetteer, and Directory, of the West-Riding of Yorkshire [1837]*, Sheffield: Leader, 1837, Vol. 1, 414.

William White, *Directory and Topography of the Borough of Leeds, and the Whole of the Clothing District of the West Riding of Yorkshire [1842]*, Sheffield: Leader, 1842, 400.

William White, *Directory and Topography of Leeds, Bradford, Halifax, Huddersfield, Wakefield, and the Whole of the Clothing Districts of the West Riding of Yorkshire [1847]*, Sheffield: Leader, 1847, 439, 445-6.

William White, *Directory and Gazetteer of Leeds, Bradford, Halifax, Huddersfield, Wakefield and the Whole of the Clothing Districts, of Yorkshire [1853]*, Sheffield: Leader, 1853, 562.

William White, *Directory and Topography of the Boroughs of Leeds, Halifax, Huddersfield and Wakefield...Yorkshire Woollen District [1858]*, Sheffield: Leader, 1858, 664-5.

William White, *Directory of Leeds, Bradford, Huddersfield, Halifax, Wakefield, Dewsbury...and all the Parishes and Villages in and near those Populous Districts of the West Riding, Forming the Great Seats of the Woollen and Worsted Manufactures [1866]*, 11th ed., Sheffield: William White, 1866, 736.

	1837	1842	1847	1853	1858	1866
Roberts Leyland, 15 Corn market	1	1	1	1		
Susannah Milner, Causeway	1		1			
William Midgley, 20 Russell Street		1	1			
John McArthur, 25 Jail Lane		1	1			
Mary McArthur, 28 Waterhouse Street				1	1	
Joseph Nicholson, 63 Kingcross Street				1	1	
Caroline Wood, 6 Union Street				1	1	
William Jagger, 6 Cripplegate then 5 Cripplegate then 63 Kingcross Street				1	1	
Ann Midgley, 6 Union Street			1		1	
T. and W. Birtwhistle, 18 Northgate						1
Thos. Riley, 21 Woolshops						1
James Lumb, New Market						1

Circulating libraries in Halifax as elsewhere are not well documented, but one example of a probable user was Robert Blatchford (1851-1943), the political journalist, who spent part of his youth in Halifax 1862-71. His mother was a dressmaker and they had little money. He worked at a lithographic printing works and had little formal schooling, but he described his reading:

There were some books, too, from the penny library: "Robinson Crusoe", "The life of Nelson", "The Old Curiosity Shop", "British Battles by Land and Sea" and the novels of Captain Marryat, the Brontes and Miss Braddon.<sup>292</sup>

This is not simply a matter of self-education, but of library use, as he borrowed the books from a 'penny library', which would probably, have been a commercial circulating library as other working class libraries were part of educational or religious organisations.

An 1848 catalogue survives for John McArthur's library.<sup>293</sup> This library was also advertised in the *Halifax Guardian*: an advertisement in December 1846 claimed that the library was the largest public library in Halifax with 3,600 volumes:

JOHN McARTHUR, 2nd DOOR DOWN JAIL LANE, respectfully acquaints his readers and the public, that he has just made his ANNUAL ADDITION to the LIBRARY, of upwards of 200 Volumes, of the latest and the most Popular Works...QUARTERLY SUBSCRIPTION, 2s 6d SINGLE VOLUMES, One Penny each.<sup>294</sup>

By the time the 1848 catalogue had been published, John McArthur had died. The library was continued by his widow Mary and it had been moved from Jail Lane to Waterhouse Street. It comprised over 4,600 volumes, but there were only 1,675

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<sup>292</sup> Robert Blatchford, *My Eighty Years*, London: Cassell, 1931, 44.

<sup>293</sup> John M'Arthur, *A Catalogue of John M'Arthur's Public Library, of Fiction and General Literature*, 24, Waterhouse Street, Halifax [1848], Halifax: John McArthur, 1848.

<sup>294</sup> [Advertisement], *Halifax Guardian*, 14(732), 12 December 1846, 1.

titles, as most of the works were multi-volumes with a few having more than one copy. Fiction, mainly light novels, was predominant. By this time advertisements for the library became more extravagant, claiming that it included:

nearly the *entire Works of our most distinguished writers of fiction*, with a large collection of Standard Works on General Literature, while the terms for Reading *are less than half the Sum* usually charged by Libraries of a similar description.<sup>295</sup>

By the end of December 1854 the library had been “entirely re-modelled” with many old books excluded and replaced by new works with a view to providing a select library of first class periodicals and general literature.<sup>296</sup> There was no reference to the number of works held, nevertheless, it seemed quite substantial.

According to Figure 5/VIII Huddersfield also had a number of commercial circulating libraries between 1837 and 1858.

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<sup>295</sup> [Advertisement], *Halifax Guardian*, 18(891), 12 January 1850, 4.

<sup>296</sup> [Advertisement], *Halifax Guardian*, 23(1,149), 16 December 1854, 1.



# **FIGURE 5/VIII COMMERCIAL CIRCULATING LIBRARIES 1837-58 - HUDDERSFIELD**

William White, *History, Gazetteer, and Directory, of the West-Riding of Yorkshire [1837]*, Sheffield: Leader, 1837, Vol. 1, 380.

William White, *Directory and Topography of the Borough of Leeds, and the Whole of the Clothing District of the West Riding of Yorkshire [1842]*, Sheffield: Leader, 1842, 235.

William White, *Directory and Topography of Leeds, Bradford, Halifax, Huddersfield, and Wakefield, and the Whole of the Clothing Districts of the West Riding of Yorkshire [1847]*, Sheffield: Leader, 1847, 505.

William, *Directory and Gazetteer of Leeds, Bradford, Halifax, Wakefield and the Whole of the Clothing Districts of Yorkshire [1853]*, Sheffield: Leader, 1853, 611.

William White, *Directory and Topography of the Borough of Leeds, Halifax, Huddersfield and Wakefield...Yorkshire Woollen District [1858]*, Sheffield: Leader, 1858, 459.

	1837	1842	1847	1853	1858
Wm. Dewhirst, 1 New Street then 38, 39 New Street	1	1	1		
Joshua Hobson, 4 Market Walk		1	1		
Joseph Bairstow, 34 then 12 Cross Church Street			1	1	1
Edwin Clayton, 10 then 9 Kirkgate			1	1	1
George and Joseph Brook, 15 then 47 Westgate				1	1
Robert Pilter, 89 King Street			1		
Benjamin Brown, 1 New Street				1	
John Moore, 18 Buxton Road				1	
James Thompson, 71 New Street					1
James Eastwood Wheatley, 18 New Street					1
Joseph Wild, 35 John William Street					1

An 1861 catalogue survives for the George and Joseph Brook library. It held 1,255 volumes of fiction making it considerably smaller than John McArthur's library in Halifax. It held fiction only with a few periodicals. John McArthur's library in Halifax held mainly fiction, but also had works on other subjects. Nevertheless, both

catalogues show that light literature was predominant. The rules of the G. and J. Brook library were listed at the beginning of the catalogue. According to Rule 7:

Subscribers are recommended to send a list of several works from the Catalogue, to prevent being disappointed in not obtaining the Books they wish to read.<sup>297</sup>

It is apparent that certain titles, at least, were in demand and were often on loan, Rule 5 states:

New Publication; if a single Volume, must be returned in three days; if a set, in four days.<sup>298</sup>

Identification of Huddersfield commercial circulating libraries was less clear-cut than those in Halifax. White's directories list libraries on booksellers' premises, but they give no indication of library type: they may not all have been commercial circulating libraries as in Huddersfield other types of library were sometimes housed at bookshops. The library held at James Wheatley's bookshop, for example, was probably the library of the Huddersfield Foreign Library Society. The Huddersfield Subscription Library was located at Joseph Brook's bookshop in Westgate, but the library which was listed at George and Joseph Brook's bookshop in Westgate was a different library at another bookshop. It was advertised in 1856 in the *Huddersfield Chronicle* as a public circulating library.<sup>299</sup>

Not all commercial circulating libraries were general, comprising mainly light literature, at least two were specialist libraries. Joshua Hobson who has been mentioned in the section on the booktrade in Huddersfield, had a bookshop and

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<sup>297</sup> G. and J. Brook, *Catalogue of G. and J. Brook's Circulating Library [1861]*, Huddersfield: G. and J. Brook, 1861, 2.

<sup>298</sup> Ibid, 2.

<sup>299</sup> [Advertisement], *Huddersfield Chronicle*, 350, 29 November 1856, 4.



circulating library and sold political publications.<sup>300</sup> J. Moore was a music and musical instrument dealer who advertised a library in the *Huddersfield Chronicle* as “consisting of upwards of Two Thousand Volumes.”<sup>301</sup> Thus Huddersfield, the home of the famous choral society, had its own music circulating library.

In conclusion commercial circulating libraries co-existed with libraries for education and self-improvement where even reading for recreation was under the auspices of organisations with an educational or religious purpose. Commercial libraries responded to the market rather than attempting to influence reading in a particular way, so light literature was predominant together with specialities not well covered elsewhere such as radical political literature and sheet music

## 5.10 NEWSROOMS

The earlier history of local newsrooms was noted in Chapter 3.<sup>302</sup> The study of newsrooms tends to be linked to the history of institutions; for example, John Hood's 1978 study of newsrooms has a section on independent newsrooms, but is mainly concerned with newsrooms attached to various organisations throughout Great Britain. The evidence is therefore scattered between many different organisations. The history of institutional newsrooms is therefore inseparable from the history of these institutions and the readers they served.<sup>303</sup>

Some mechanics' institutes had newsrooms: for example, Halifax from 1850, while others, such as Huddersfield, purchased newspapers for their reading rooms.

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<sup>300</sup> See above 5.1.3.

<sup>301</sup> [Advertisement], *Huddersfield Chronicle*, 144, 1 January 1853, 4.

<sup>302</sup> See above 3.7.

<sup>303</sup> John B. Hood, *The Origin and Development of the Newsroom and Reading Room from 1650 to Date, with Some Consideration of their Role in the Social History of the Period*, 254-64.



Newsrooms in mechanics' institutes could often be a focus of political conflict, which was contrary to the institutes' philosophy of avoiding all religious and political controversy. It was not simply a matter of excluding radical newspapers, as most newspapers, both national and local, supported political parties and specific causes and campaigns. They were a source of strongly held political views with their editorials and letters. Thus, at the Halifax Mechanics' Institution in 1852, the suggestion that the *People's Paper*, a Chartist paper, be taken was declined. Letters in the *Halifax Guardian* in 1850 referred not so much to individual newspaper titles held in the newsroom, but to the selection and alleged bias towards nonconformity.<sup>304</sup>

The newsroom attached to the second Halifax subscription library in the Old Cock Yard discontinued the *Times* in 1834, following the downfall of the Whig ministry. The *Halifax Express* reported:

Many of the subscribers to the Public News Room, in the Old Cock Yard, in this town, have signed a requisition for a general meeting, to expel the *Times*, and substitute a more consistent morning paper. We are told, in a quarter of considerable information that the circulation of that profligate and unprincipled journal is already twelve hundred copies a day less than it was, before the dismissal of the ministry! In London, it has been very extensively dismissed from the news and coffee rooms. May such ever be the reward of political tergiversation.<sup>305</sup>

Some newspapers, radical newspapers in particular, which were not readily available in libraries, were held in eating houses and public houses. In the Chartist newspaper,

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<sup>304</sup> Linda J. Parr, *The Library of the Halifax Mechanics' Institution 1825-1857*, 183-4.

<sup>305</sup> *Halifax Express*, 4(199), 27 November 1834, 3.

the *Northern Star*, in 1838 R. Buchanan, tailor of Huddersfield, set up a newsroom and coffee house:

The NORTHERN STAR, and the other LEEDS PAPERS, may be had every Saturday Morning, immediately on arrival of the Post. A stock of useful Books and Pamphlets will be kept constantly on Hand.

Tea, Coffee and other Refreshments to be had every day.

Lemonade, Ginger Beer, and other Non-Intoxicating Beverages kept constantly on Sale.<sup>306</sup>

In the following month an advertisement for Henry Tiffany's public house 'Labour and Health', Halifax:

Hot Dinners every Day to suit the Wants of Persons who may be inclined to call, at the usual Low Prices.

N.B. Good Ale, and Bottled and Draught Porter of the First Quality, always on Hand.

The following Newspapers are taken in, viz:- The Sun, (a London Evening Paper), the Northern Star, and the York Courant

Halifax, April 18th, 1838.<sup>307</sup>

Newspapers were available therefore for those partaking of refreshments without having to buy their own copies or subscribe to a newsroom. Newsrooms which existed in their own right, could be political in character. The Chartists had a reading room at their headquarters on Bull Close Lane, Halifax in 1842.<sup>308</sup> Other political interests also had newsrooms. By 1842 there was a Conservative newsroom in Halifax.<sup>309</sup> Similarly, in Huddersfield there was a Conservative newsroom with about 70 readers in 1837.<sup>310</sup>

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<sup>306</sup> [Advertisement], *Northern Star*, 1(20), 31 March 1838, 2.

<sup>307</sup> [Advertisement], *Northern Star*, 1(24), 28 April 1838, 1.

<sup>308</sup> J.F.C. Harrison, *Learning and Living, 1790-1960*, 103.

<sup>309</sup> Local Intelligence. Halifax. Conservative News-Room, *Halifax Guardian*, 10(500), 25 June 1842, 5.

<sup>310</sup> William White, *History, Gazetteer, and Directory, of the West-Riding of Yorkshire [1837]*, Vol. 1, 365.

Not all newsrooms were political or affected by political controversy: independent newsrooms had also been formed. By 1830 there were at least six in Halifax.<sup>311</sup> A newsroom in the Assembly Rooms Halifax is referred to in directories for 1837 and 1845.<sup>312</sup> John Crabtree, historian of Halifax, described it in 1836 as being “well and regularly supplied with the London and provincial daily and weekly papers.”<sup>313</sup> Clearly some of these newsrooms would have been set up partly or wholly for economic rather than political reasons, as the name 'commercial newsroom' suggests. A commercial newsroom was set up in Huddersfield in 1829. A document relating to its formation has survived, relating that it was to be a public newsroom with an annual subscription and an entrance fee of 10s.<sup>314</sup> There was also an Exchange Newsroom in Halifax by 1854. According to a report in the *Halifax Guardian*, it appeared to be just in process of formation at this time, but over 160 people had become subscribers and £100 had been received in donations.<sup>315</sup>

## 5.11 CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY LIBRARIES

### 5.11.1 Introduction

The co-operative movement was founded in Rochdale in 1844, although there were earlier antecedents. Its purpose was not simply production and sale of goods, but also educational, including the provision of libraries. There were libraries in

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<sup>311</sup> See above 3.7.

<sup>312</sup> William White, *History, Gazetteer, and Directory, of the West Riding of Yorkshire [1837]*, Vol. 1, 403.

J.U. Walker, *Directory of the Parish of Halifax [1845]*, 3.

<sup>313</sup> John Crabtree, *A Concise History of the Parish and Vicarage of Halifax, in the County of York*, 356.

<sup>314</sup> Huddersfield Commercial Newsroom, *[Notice of Formation]*, 1829.

<sup>315</sup> Exchange News Room, *Halifax Guardian*, 22(1,118), 13 May 1854, 5.



Lancashire and Yorkshire, as the co-operative movement existed to benefit the working class, which was largely concentrated in industrial towns. Edwin Barnish, librarian of the Rochdale Pioneers' Society, gave a paper on the co-operative libraries of Lancashire, Yorkshire and Durham at the second annual meeting of the Library Association in 1879, in which he identified 12 in Yorkshire. The largest of these was the Todmorden Industrial Society Library followed by the library of the Halifax Industrial Society.<sup>316</sup> Huddersfield did not have a library at this time. Interest in co-operative society libraries has only been fairly recent. They have tended to be overlooked as working class libraries with far more attention being paid to mechanics' institute libraries: Thomas Kelly in his book *Early Public Libraries*, for example, covers co-operative society libraries only briefly, referring only to the library of the Rochdale Pioneers.<sup>317</sup> Research has been carried out in the past decade, notably by Jean Everitt in her Ph.D. thesis.<sup>318</sup> It confirms Barnish's findings, as 84 of the 150 co-operative society libraries known to exist were in Lancashire and Yorkshire.<sup>319</sup> By 1914 most of these libraries had been discontinued or at least had declined.<sup>320</sup> In some towns there may have been only a few years between the formation of a co-operative society library and the establishment of a public library.

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<sup>316</sup> Edwin Barnish, *The Coöperative [sic] Libraries of Lancashire, Yorkshire and Durham, Transactions and Proceedings of the Second Annual Meeting of the Library Association, Manchester, 1879*, London: C. Whittingham, 1880, 62-3.

<sup>317</sup> Thomas Kelly, *Early Public Libraries*, 227.

<sup>318</sup> Jean Everitt, *Co-operative Society Libraries and Newsrooms of Lancashire and Yorkshire from 1844 to 1918*.

<sup>319</sup> Jean Everitt, *Co-operative Society Libraries and Newsrooms of Lancashire and Yorkshire from 1844 to 1918*, 22.

<sup>320</sup> *Ibid*, 23.

Co-operative society libraries were a relatively late development in the history of libraries. However, to see them only as the forerunners of public libraries detracts from their importance as substantial general libraries.

### **5.11.2 Halifax Industrial Society Library**

Halifax had a notable co-operative society, which began in 1850. Such was its success that it attracted the attention of G.J. Holyoake (1817-1906), the well-known co-operator and journalist. He wrote a short history, published about 1867, in which he stated that hitherto Rochdale had been the “Mecca of Co-operation”, but there were reasons why social pilgrims should find their way to Halifax. The reasons, however, were not educational, as at this time no part of the profits was set aside for education.<sup>321</sup> Another history was written to commemorate the society's fiftieth anniversary in 1901 by Montagu Blatchford (c.1848-1910), socialist and journalist, who lived for a time in Halifax. A library was set up in 1872, but due to financial difficulties caused by unwise speculation, was only to last for 12 years to 1884. It was sold to the Halifax Corporation for £250 to be used for the new public library.<sup>322</sup> A library catalogue was printed in 1873 showing a sizeable general library, even though it has only been established the previous year. There must have been a considerable financial outlay at its formation. A supplement was published in 1879. It was divided into the following classes:

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<sup>321</sup> G.J. Holyoake, *The History of Co-operation in Halifax*, London: London Book Store, c.1867, 7, 23.

<sup>322</sup> Montague Blatchford, *The History of the Halifax Industrial Society Limited for Fifty Years. To Commemorate the Celebration of its Jubilee in January 1901*, Halifax: Womersley, 1901, 118, 174.

		1873 Catalogue	1879 Supplement
A	Religion, Philosophy, Theology	213	60
B	Poetry and Drama	69	16
C	Political Economy	69	17
D	History Ancient and Modern	296	11
E	Biography and Autobiography	236	46
F	Science, Arts and Education	154	47
G	Natural History and Geography	108	16
H	Topography and Travels	201	10
I	Fiction and Tales	558	582
	Fiction and Tales (By Popular Authors)	602	?
K	Miscellaneous Works	289	39
L	Magazines and Reviews	94	12
M	Reference Works	58	16
	TOTAL	2,947	872+ <sup>323</sup>

The 1,160 volumes of fiction in the 1873 catalogue included works by popular authors such as Dickens and Walter Scott and more recent writers, for example, Mrs. Worboise and Mrs. Henry Wood. The 1879 catalogue supplement included a further 582 volumes of fiction and further volumes by popular authors, many of which were second copies. An eighth copy of Mrs. Henry Wood's *East Lynne* was listed!

Barnish's survey of 1879 showed that Halifax had 4,060 books for loan, 56 reference books and 200 borrowers from a society membership of 6,870.<sup>324</sup> So only 2.91% of the members borrowed books. Fiction was obviously important as there were multiple copies of some popular works, which in absence of issue statistics provides evidence of heavy use. The library did not exist solely for entertainment as it formed part of the educational work of the society, but a large proportion of the

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<sup>323</sup> Halifax Industrial Society, *Catalogue of the Library of the Halifax Industrial Society Limited*, Manchester: North of England Co-operative Printing Society, 1873.  
Halifax Industrial Society, *Supplement of the Catalogue of the Library of the Halifax Industrial Society Limited September, 1879*, Manchester: Co-operative Printing Society, 1879.

<sup>324</sup> Edwin Barnish, *The Coöperative [sic] Libraries of Lancashire, Yorkshire and Durham*, 62-3.



books were fiction and on subjects such as history and biography, reading for entertainment rather than education seemed to be paramount.

### **5.11.3 Todmorden Industrial Society Library**

Todmorden was a small town in comparison with Halifax and Huddersfield, yet in Barnish's survey in 1879, it had the largest co-operative society library in Yorkshire with 4,075 books for loan, 678 reference volumes and 639 borrowers of a membership of 2,341. 27.29% of the members were borrowers, which was far higher than the figure for Halifax. It was the foremost co-operative society library in Yorkshire, but it was not the largest in England. Six of the Lancashire libraries in the survey were larger.

The success of the Todmorden Industrial Society may have been due to its position on the border with Lancashire and the influence of nearby Rochdale, or simply because of the absence of alternative facilities such as commercial circulating libraries. By 1867 a reading room had been opened and there was a library from November 1868. From December 1868 to December 1869, its first year of operation, it had over 700 volumes and 3,867 issues.<sup>325</sup> The library had been enlarged in 1891 and there were as many as 12 reading rooms in the locality. The total number of books was 7,002 and the issue for 1890 was 27,211 as follows:

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<sup>325</sup> Dale-Street Co-operative Society Annual Soiree, *Todmorden and Hebden Bridge Weekly Advertiser*, 642, 18 December 1869, 3.

	Number in Library	Issues
Fiction	2,143	17,922
Bound Magazines	1,251	2,096
History and Biography	1,024	1,225
Voyages and Travels	404	1,047
Theology and Religion	247	813
Science, Art and Manufacture	837	2,080
Music and Poetry	239	281
Miscellaneous	857	2,247
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7,002</b>	<b>27,711<sup>326</sup></b>

Fiction was the most popular category with 2,143 books and 17,922 issues comprising 64.67% of the issue. The library continued until 1896-7 when it handed its 8,000 volumes to Todmorden Borough to become the town's public library.<sup>327</sup> Thus Todmorden Industrial Society and its library made a considerable impact on the town where the 'co-operative culture' was predominant in the last 30 years of the nineteenth century and beyond.

#### **5.11.4 Huddersfield Industrial Society Library**

The modern co-operative movement began in 1860 in Huddersfield, but the establishment of a library was a much later development. In 1893 the society established a reading room in Huddersfield and three branch reading rooms in connection with stores at Mirfield, Kirkheaton and Outlane. A library was opened in

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<sup>326</sup> Todmorden Industrial and Co-operative Society. The Annual Soiree, *Todmorden and District News*, 1,136, 23 January 1891, 6.

<sup>327</sup> Bernard Jennings ed., *Pennine Valley: A History of Upper Calderdale*, Otley: Smith Settle, 1992, 188.

1894.<sup>328</sup> A catalogue was issued in 1899, which was strong in fiction, following the same pattern as similar societies.<sup>329</sup>

## 5.12 CONCLUSION

The population of Halifax and Huddersfield increased rapidly during the nineteenth century, almost doubling between 1831 and 1891, the rate of literacy improved and education was no longer the preserve of a middle class minority.

From 1830 to the coming of the public libraries many libraries of different types were formed in Halifax and Huddersfield and also in the towns and villages of the surrounding area. The amount of surviving material precludes coverage of most of the libraries identified outside the main towns unless they were particularly notable, and many small mechanics' institutes and similar organisations are omitted in this study apart from the inclusion in statistical tables. The libraries of Halifax and Huddersfield followed, for the most part, national and regional trends. Both Halifax and Huddersfield were well supplied with booksellers and printers and had a slightly higher proportion of workers in the book and printing trades than Bradford, Leeds and Wakefield. William Milner, bookseller and printer, publisher of popular literature and cheap reprints of classics was based in Halifax whereas Joshua Hobson, the radical bookseller and printer, spent part of his life in Huddersfield. Subscription libraries were well established by 1830. The Halifax Circulating

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<sup>328</sup> Owen Balmforth, *Huddersfield Industrial Society Ltd. History of Fifty Years' Progress 1860-1910*, Manchester: Co-operative Wholesale Society, 1910, 214.

<sup>329</sup> Huddersfield Co-operative Society, *Catalogue of the Books in the Library, 1899*, Huddersfield: Whitehead, 1899.



Library was the largest library in both the Halifax and Huddersfield areas, throughout this period. In Halifax parish, however, the Luddenden Library has attracted more attention partly due to an article in the *Leeds Mercury* written by John Longbottom in 1898.<sup>330</sup> It was not simply historical narrative, but included personal reminiscences, which would be a significant supplement to formal records. George Tomlinson was concerned about writing the early history of the Huddersfield Subscription Library while it remained in living memory. Interest in the history and traditions of a library may have detracted from current problems, for example, recruitment of new members. Newspaper accounts can give misleading impressions, such as reports in Todmorden newspapers relating to the Todmorden Old Library, where it is portrayed as a thriving institution when it was on the verge of being disbanded.

Subscription libraries were general libraries and catalogues show the increasing trend towards history, biography, magazines, voyages and travels and above all, fiction. The demand for lighter literature was so great, that Halifax Circulating Library, after it became the library of the Halifax Literary and Philosophical Society, despite being the largest library in Halifax, had to resort to subscribing to Mudie's Library.

Not all middle class libraries were general, some were more specialised. The Halifax Literary and Philosophical Society Library and the Huddersfield Scientific and Literary Society Library had small libraries, which were mainly scientific. Some natural history societies had libraries and Huddersfield had several special libraries:

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<sup>330</sup> John Longbottom, *Local Notes and Queries*, Number 1,042, "Ye Olde Luddenden Librarye", 12.

the Huddersfield Archaeological and Topographical Society (later the Yorkshire Archaeological Society) Library, the Huddersfield Foreign Library Society, the Huddersfield Medical Library and a law library. There were no Halifax equivalents.

Both Halifax and Huddersfield played a leading part in the formation of working class libraries. The West Riding of Yorkshire was one of the major areas of industrialisation and had many mechanics' institutes. Halifax Mechanics' Institution at least in its early years, had one of the largest mechanics' institution in Yorkshire, but it was the Huddersfield Mechanics' Institution, which had the outstanding reputation. The library often found it difficult to meet the needs of its considerable membership. It provides a clear example of the enthusiasm of working class men and youths for reading. The Huddersfield Female Educational Institute was a local variant as most mechanics' institutes including Halifax had women members. The library was not extensive, but its very existence demonstrates recognition of provision of libraries for working class women and girls. Halifax was known for its factory libraries, as it was the only town in Yorkshire in 1851 to have works' libraries. The minutes of the later Dean Clough Library, rather than being an illustration of a different library type, highlight instead the position of the librarian and administrative problems in library management. Nevertheless, it is obvious from the controversy which surrounded it, that the library was seen to be a very important resource for its users.

Commercial circulating libraries were small concerns run in conjunction with bookselling, but they satisfied the market for light literature and Huddersfield had special libraries for radical political literature and printed music, which were

excluded from other libraries. Newsrooms were specialised in that they provided a specific type of material: newspapers for information on national and local events and issues, but often for specific political or commercial purposes. Co-operative society libraries were a relatively late development, but in 1879 the Todmorden Industrial Society Library was the largest in Yorkshire followed by Halifax.

In the Halifax and Huddersfield areas, like other areas of Britain, reading was no longer confined to religious works. Nevertheless, scientific reading had not taken its place. The trend throughout this period was towards fiction and lighter literature and reading for recreation rather than education. This was equally true of both middle class subscription libraries and the more working class mechanics' institute libraries. In general libraries subject divisions and their relative size were often similar, so that they differed not so much in content, but by class of reader. Special libraries concentrated on a particular interest or may have been formed to cover a subject such as radical political literature, which was not well covered in general libraries.

There are no statistics in this area of how many people used libraries during this period. Those who were interested solely in reading could join one of the subscription libraries, a commercial circulating library, a newsroom or the Huddersfield Foreign Library Society; although some may have been attracted by the strong social element. Other libraries were attached to institutes and societies, so members may have subscribed for the classes, the lectures or simply interest in a specific subject rather than because of the library. Issue statistics and issue registers, where they exist, supply evidence of the use made of libraries, but even where



readers can be identified, nothing is known about most of them other than their names and possibly occupations nor would the composition of a library's readership remain static. Moreover, many people would use more than one library.

The use of libraries was not widespread at this time, but despite the variety of library types and subjects covered, not everyone borrowed library books. Those who did not use libraries could buy their own books, not only wealthy people with private libraries, but also working men. With a considerable market for cheap reprints as typified by William Milner, they could purchase books of their choice, whereas libraries were not free: they required payment of a subscription and some of the more popular titles may have been constantly on loan and therefore often unavailable. In the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries there was a certain degree of self-education with many working men pursuing courses of reading. Throughout the nineteenth century education and reading became more institutionalised in schools, mechanics' institutes and libraries, but personal reading and book purchase continued outside this formalised organisation. Self-education to some extent could still be carried on within these institutions as not all books held in the libraries related to the classes and lectures. Whether reading purchased books or books borrowed from a library, for education or for recreation, there would still be a substantial number of people, especially women, who were illiterate.

Libraries may have had an educational and cultural effect on the middle classes, but conversely the middle classes had an effect on most libraries of both a middle class and working class nature. Middle class men made substantial donations

thereby influencing the libraries' contents and they served on committees, which selected books for purchase and formulated library rules.

## CHAPTER 6

### LIBRARIES ATTACHED TO CHURCHES, CHAPELS AND RELIGIOUS ORGANISATIONS FROM 1830 TO THE COMING OF THE PUBLIC LIBRARIES

#### 6.1 CHURCH OF ENGLAND LIBRARIES

##### 6.1.1 Halifax Parish Church Library

Nothing is known about the Halifax Parish Church Library from the early years of the eighteenth century to the 1850s. The early history has been covered in Chapter 2. Halifax Parish Church Library was founded over 140 years before the Halifax Circulating Library. Furthermore, it was one of the earliest parish libraries in the West Riding of Yorkshire.<sup>1</sup> Given the location of the library in the centre of the Halifax parish (later deanery), the rise in population and the growth of literacy, it could have followed the trend of other local libraries: have been augmented, included popular works and have been well used. This, however, was not the case; indeed nothing could have been further from the truth. Two letters in the *Halifax Courier* in 1853 revealed the true state of affairs. 'Quiz and Friend' writing in January described the condition of the books:

They are enclosed in two bookcases with broken glass doors, in a damp place, the outer windows of which are also broken, - are covered with dust, and on taking them up some fell to pieces, mouldered with damp, and for want of due conservation.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See above 2.2.2.

<sup>2</sup> 'Quiz and Friend', Halifax Old Church Library [Letter], *Halifax Courier*, 1(4) 29 January 1853, 2.



Another letter from 'Scrutator' the next month complained:

Year after year the once carefully tended volumes have remained in the most neglected condition; and heaps of the smaller works in loose vellum covers, are thrown in the wildest confusion upon the shelves, and buried in the dust of at least a century.<sup>3</sup>

An editorial took up the challenge:

It is now for the Press to let a few rays of light into the vaults, and with the aid of 'Scrutator' we trust that this discreditable state of things will be amended.<sup>4</sup>

Correspondents' immediate concern in 1853 was not the readership, but the state of the books. 'Quiz and Friend' wrote:

About 200 or 300 valuable works in Latin and English are (not preserved but) detained in durance vile in the vestry or crypt, under whose guardianship, if anyone's, or to whom they belong, it might be inconvenient to say...many are bound with vellum, and very valuable; several are now out of print.<sup>5</sup>

'Scrutator' was concerned with the history of the library as well as the books as such.<sup>6</sup> As the library was "buried in the dust of at least a century", it suggests that it was not being used, although 'Scrutator' himself had looked at some of the books as a boy. There is evidence that books being borrowed in the earlier years of the library's existence as shown in Chapter 2, but the number of users may have been small as few people were literate and even fewer were able to read those books

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<sup>3</sup> 'Scrutator', The Library in the Crypt [Letter], *Halifax Courier*, 1(6), 12 February 1853, 8.

<sup>4</sup> The Halifax Library [Editorial], *Halifax Courier*, 1(6), 12 February 1853, 4.

<sup>5</sup> 'Quiz and Friend', Halifax Old Church Library, 2.

<sup>6</sup> 'Scrutator', The Library in the Crypt [Letter], 8.

written in Latin.<sup>7</sup> By the mid-nineteenth century many more libraries and bookshops had come into being, so the population was certainly not dependent on one centrally located church library for its reading. 'Quiz and Friend' suggested that:

a *suitable* place should be provided for them, [the books] - or the present crypt made so, - that they should be put under proper guardianship...Then they might form the nucleus of a parochial library by the gifts and purchase (by subscription) of more modern works, and the present crypt or vestry (if not considered derogatory to its dusty sanctity), or some other place, be used as a reading-room, free to the inhabitants of Halifax.<sup>8</sup>

The library had, in fact, been a parochial library for the past two centuries. It is evident from the concern with 'guardianship', that there was lack of security or there was no librarian or person directly responsible for it.

This was not the first time the inadequate condition of the library has been discussed, for, according to 'Scrutator':

Nearly twenty years since, the question was mooted as to who were the responsible conservators of the library; and during that long interval its mouldering remains have been carelessly abandoned to further ruin and decay.<sup>9</sup>

He also wrote:

It is not known in whose incumbency the library began to be disregarded, or the worm, and damp commenced their interrupted reign.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> See above 2.2.2

<sup>8</sup> 'Quiz and Friend', Halifax Old Church Library, 2.

<sup>9</sup> 'Scrutator', The Library in the Crypt, 8.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, 8.

The neglect seems even more surprising as some, at least, of the vicars of Halifax had a demonstrable interest in books and libraries. The Reverend Dr. George Legh, Vicar 1731-75, was one of the originators of the Halifax Circulating Library, while two of his successors, the Reverend Dr. Henry Coulthurst 1790-1817 and the Reverend Samuel Knight 1817-32 also served on the committee.<sup>11</sup> Archdeacon Charles Musgrave, Vicar of Halifax 1827-75, was a committee member in 1830 and was still a member of the library in 1842.<sup>12</sup> Although responsibility for the state of the library ultimately rested on the vicars of Halifax, the parish library was merely in line with the national trend to decay and lack of use, as is apparent from the report of the Select Committee on Public Libraries of 1849, which drew attention to the neglect of many old libraries. A list of clerical and parochial libraries is included, but they are mainly Bray libraries and Halifax is omitted. The report stated of the libraries founded by Dr. Bray or the associates of Dr. Bray:

the great majority of them have fallen into desuetude for want of means for their maintenance and increase.<sup>13</sup>

A correspondence in *Notes and Queries* followed 1852-9. Halifax, although excluded from the 1849 Public Libraries *Report*, was referred to in *Notes and Queries* in 1853 where it was described:

Under the chancel of the spacious and venerable parish church of Halifax, in Yorkshire, are some large rooms upon a level with the lower part of the churchyard, in one of which is contained a good

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<sup>11</sup> See above 3.5.1.

<sup>12</sup> Calderdale District Archives, MISC: 49/4, Halifax Circulating Library *Minutes 1820-48*. Halifax Subscription Library, *Catalogue 1842*.

<sup>13</sup> House of Commons, Select Committee on Public Libraries, *Report*, 221-8.



library of books. Robert Clay, D.D., vicar of Halifax, who died April 9, 1628, was buried in this library, which he is said to have built.<sup>14</sup>

It was included in a list of 35 parochial libraries, which had been mentioned in the journal in 1856.<sup>15</sup>

T.W. Shore, Executive Officer of the Hartley Institution, Southampton, gave a paper on parochial libraries at the Library Association Conference in 1878. The appendix to his published paper "Tabular List of Old Parochial Libraries in England and Wales" included Halifax.<sup>16</sup> So by the late nineteenth century interest was being taken in parochial libraries and concern expressed about their condition. The library in Halifax Parish Church was obviously known outside the area as it appeared in both *Notes and Queries* in 1853 and 1856 and T.W. Shore's list in 1879. Letters to the *Halifax Courier* on the condition of the library and references to it in *Notes and Queries* may have prompted some improvements. In about 1857 the inner vestry was formed in the church and the library was removed into the vicar's vestry. Archdeacon Musgrave had several books bound at his own expense in 1861 and donated books to the library including the works of Dean Sutcliffe and Latimer's *Sermons*.<sup>17</sup>

The Halifax Parish Church Library received a donation of books from the bequest of William Priestley in 1860. Priestley also bequeathed his etymological collection to the Halifax Literary and Philosophical Society Library, as we have seen

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<sup>14</sup> Parochial Libraries, *Notes and Queries*, First Series 8(207), 15 October 1853, 369.

<sup>15</sup> Parochial Libraries, *Notes and Queries*, Second Series 1(23), 7 June 1856, 459.

<sup>16</sup> T.W. Shore, Old Parochial Libraries of England and Wales, *Library Association Transactions and Proceedings of the First Annual Meeting of the Library Association, Oxford, 1878*, London: C. Whittingham, 1879, 147.

<sup>17</sup> T.W. Hanson, Halifax Parish Church Library, 45-6.

in the previous chapter.<sup>18</sup> The bequest itself was not a small donation as there were 355 titles and 30 works of music. It was larger than the original library at its foundation. The catalogue of works presented by William Priestley was transcribed from the original by Thomas Turner. Although most of the books were theological, there were a few classical, historical and travel works. He also left £70 to the vicar for the erection of shelves.<sup>19</sup> The library was kept in two parts, the old library in the vicar's vestry and the Priestley library in the outer choir vestry. This separation may have been for reasons of space, but the Priestley library, although regarded as the more modern part of the collection, contained many older books. It may have attracted readers, but no loan statistics or records of use survive. Nor is there evidence of use of the 30 works of music in the collection. The Reverend Francis Pigou, Vicar 1875-88, wrote in his autobiography:

We had a splendid choir at Halifax, trained by Dr. Roberts and subsequently by ... Mr. Garland, Dr. Roberts' successor.<sup>20</sup>

Perhaps the choir used the church music in the library.

Under Francis Pigou who succeeded Archdeacon Charles Musgrave, incumbent for 48 years, the church was refurbished. His autobiography includes a chapter on his ministry in Halifax, 55 pages in length, but he made no mention of the library.<sup>21</sup> Nevertheless, the Reverend Robert Merrick, Curate of the parish church

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<sup>18</sup> See above 5.2 and 5.5.2.

<sup>19</sup> Calderdale District Archives, HAS/B:22/14, Halifax Parish Church, *Catalogue of Books in the Library and Related Correspondence 1862-83*.

<sup>20</sup> Francis Pigou, *Phases of My Life*, London: Arnold, 1898, 320.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, 295-349.



1871-81 and the antiquary John Lister (1847-1933) prepared a catalogue, which was completed by 1883.<sup>22</sup> The *Halifax Courier* described some of the works and expressed the following hopes:

Now that the treasures can more easily be known, may they be made use of...The class of books enumerated covers a wide area, and even a moderate use of them would tend to lay that broad foundation of varied learning of which many a cleric of bygone time was an example.<sup>23</sup>

These wishes were not to be realised: over 50 years later in 1935 Bishop George Frodsham, Vicar of Halifax 1920-37, commented that the library had been “little used for generations.”<sup>24</sup>

### **6.1.2 Halifax Church Institute Library**

The Halifax Parish Church Library may have been little used by the nineteenth century, but rather than expand to include more modern works, a church institute with classes, lectures and a library was formed in October 1857. It was not in the church itself, but in rooms at Barum Top, Halifax. The formation of a church institute in Halifax paralleled developments elsewhere. As mechanics' institutes tended to be dominated by nonconformists, church institutes were set up to provide educational facilities within the Church of England. So similar institutes were started in Bradford and Wakefield in the 1840s and after earlier attempts a permanent Leeds

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<sup>22</sup> Calderdale District Archives, HAS/B:22/14. Halifax Parish Church, *Catalogue of Books in the Library and Related Correspondence, 1862-83*.

T.W. Hanson, Halifax Parish Church Library, 46-7.

<sup>23</sup> Local News. The Old Books at Halifax Parish Church, *Halifax Courier*, 29(1,464), 8 January 1881, 6.

<sup>24</sup> F. Harrison, *The Library the Parish Church. Paper read to the Annual Meeting of “Friends” on Dec. 12 th 1935*, Privately printed, 2.



Church Institute was formed in 1857. By 1873 the Ripon diocese had 17 church institutes.<sup>25</sup>

Rules and a catalogue survive and annual reports are mentioned in local newspapers, but no minutes remain. There were both religious and secular books in the library, but some concern was expressed about the secular activities of the institute. The Reverend A. Barry of Leeds said at the annual meeting in 1861:

He was glad, however, to find that the institute was doing so much for secular as well as religious truth; and to keep up its object they must keep up its character as a church institute, neither more nor less. He did not, however, think that a church institute should be a mechanics' institute in disguise, but it should have a distinctive character of its own. Certain books should be excluded from the library, and certain lectures forbidden.<sup>26</sup>

Edward Akroyd, Member of Parliament for Halifax 1865-74, an Anglican and manufacturer, who had already formed two factory libraries described in the previous chapter, presented 27 volumes in 1858.<sup>27</sup> They were religious including, for example, J.J. Blunt's *A History of the Christian Church during the First Three Centuries* and W.F. Hook, *Meditations*.<sup>28</sup> The following month a further 27 volumes, mainly religious, were presented by Mrs. Turley. It was reported that the library was not restricted to one class of book and it had been completely fitted up

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<sup>25</sup> J.F.C. Harrison, *Learning and Living 1790-1960*, 182.

<sup>26</sup> Halifax Church Institute, *Halifax Guardian*, 29(1,463), 9 February 1861, 8.

<sup>27</sup> See above 5.8.2.

<sup>28</sup> J.J. Blunt, *A History of the Christian Church during the First Three Centuries*, London: John Murray, 1856.

W.F.H. Hook ed., *Some Meditations for Every Day in the Year*, Leeds: 1846-8.

for their reception.<sup>29</sup> Mrs. Akroyd made further donations to the library in June and July. In June she gave some religious works and in July books, which she had purchased from donations for that purpose. Not only religious works were donated, as in July George Beaumont gave 18 volumes of the *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society* and William Craven 24 volumes of Russell's *Modern Europe* and Anderson's *British Poets*.<sup>30</sup> Later in the month it was reported that Miss Edwards of Savile Terrace, Halifax had given 70 volumes including Shakespeare's *Works*.<sup>31</sup> Despite all these donations the library needed more books and by July 1859 the Mayor of Halifax, T.S. Walsh, had started a subscription for raising £100 as a book fund for the library and subscribed £5 himself. Others followed his example including Archdeacon Charles Musgrave and "A Lady".<sup>32</sup>

The Halifax Church Institute thus made a promising start with liberal donations both in books and money for the library and several eminent supporters. It is notable that women were among the benefactors, even if like Mrs. Akroyd, it may have been by virtue of their husbands' positions. Of course the number of donations by women may have simply reflected the high numbers of women who regularly went to church. The general trend was, as it remains, for a higher female than male attendance at church. Statistics reveal that more women than men were confirmed in

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<sup>29</sup> The Church Institute, *Halifax Guardian*, 26(1,327), 29 May 1858, 5.

<sup>30</sup> Halifax Church Institute, *Halifax Guardian*, 26(1,328), 5 June 1858, 4.

Halifax Church Institute, *Halifax Guardian*, 26(1,332), 3 July 1858, 5.

William Russell, *The History of Modern Europe*, London: 1786

Robert Anderson, *A Complete Edition of the Poets of Great Britain*, London: J. and A. Arch; Edinburgh: Bell, Bradfute and Mundell, 1792-5.

<sup>31</sup> Halifax Church Institute, *Halifax Courier*, 6(291), 31 July 1858, 4.

<sup>32</sup> Halifax Church Institute, *Halifax Courier*, 7(342), 23 July 1859, 5.



the parishes of Halifax Deanery 1888-1914. At Halifax Parish Church the proportion was 35% men and 65% women.<sup>33</sup>

The number and composition of the membership of the institute library is not known, but there were several categories of membership. The library was open to men, women and young people. Men over 18 paid 6s per annum or 2s per quarter. Women were in the same category as Sunday school teachers, scholars and minors paying 4s per annum or 1/6d per quarter. Their terms of admission, however, were more favourable than for juveniles who were only able to use the library within specified hours.<sup>34</sup>

By 1864 the institute was flourishing; the number of issues was 4,072 and a paid librarian had been employed from May 1863 so that the library could be open during the evenings from 7.00 to 9.00 and on Wednesday and Saturday afternoons, 3.00 to 5.00. A catalogue was published about 1863, which included both religious and other works. Books on self-help such as *Men who Have Risen*, Samuel Smiles: *Self-help* and George Craik, *Pursuit of Knowledge under Difficulties* appear together with stories with a moral lesson such as *Aesop's Fables*.<sup>35</sup> Other tales and novels were included by popular authors, for example, Walter Scott and J. Fenimore Cooper as well as books on history, biography, travel, natural history and other subjects.

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<sup>33</sup> John A. Hargreaves, *Religion and Society in the Parish of Halifax c.1740-1914*, Ph.D., C.N.A.A., 1991, 288.

<sup>34</sup> Halifax Church Institute, *Rules and Bye-Laws of the Halifax Church Institute, together with a Catalogue of the Books in the Library [1862]*, Halifax: Whitley and Booth, 1862, 3.

<sup>35</sup> *Men who have Risen*, London: Hogg, [1859].  
Samuel Smiles, *Self-help; With Illustrations of Conduct and Perseverance*, London: John Murray, 1859.  
George L. Craik, *The Pursuit of Knowledge under Difficulties*, London: 1830-1.



Some, but by no means all, had a religious association. Many of the history books were related to the history of the church, while many biographies were of religious figures, for example, *Life of Henry Venn* and travel books were connected with Christian missions, for example, Livingstone's *Missionary Travels in South Africa*.<sup>36</sup> Despite earlier donations the highest number in the catalogue was 533, although this number related to titles, not volumes and some were multi-volumed. When the catalogue was published the institute had only been in existence for five years.

Many of the books in the library attracted few readers. In 1864 the annual issue was 3,622, but according to Edward Akroyd, chairman of the meeting:

... he had been told by the secretary that the circulation of the books had slightly diminished during the year. This was perhaps owing to the fact that most of the members had read the principal of the entertaining books in the library.<sup>37</sup>

Akroyd also expressed his concern that all the money in the book fund had not been spent. Three years later in January 1868, the library possessed 1,667 volumes, 200 of which had been added in the past year, but the annual issue had declined further to 2,004. Edward Akroyd was still concerned that all the money in the book fund had not been spent, for he believed the chief source of the attraction of the institute was the possession of a "very fine and full library".<sup>38</sup> The number of issues had risen by

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<sup>36</sup> David Livingstone, *Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa*, London: John Murray, 1857.

<sup>37</sup> Halifax Church Institute, *Halifax Guardian*, 33(1,667), 7 January 1865, 4.

<sup>38</sup> Halifax Church Institute, *Halifax Guardian*, 36(1,819), 4 January 1868, 6.

the following year to 2,296.<sup>39</sup> The church institute clearly flourished at first in the 1860s but gradually declined, moved to cheaper premises in Crown Street and had ceased to exist by 1911.<sup>40</sup> One of the principal features of the Halifax Church Institute was its library, but by the time it was formed in 1857, as in most general libraries, there was a preference for more popular subjects and light literature. The issue figures of over 3,000 a year for much of the 1860s seem healthy, but as there is a lack of information on the number of institute members and library users, it is impossible to identify the readers other than to conclude that they were members of the Church of England and some were women and children. Many readers appeared to have preferred entertaining works, but for those who wanted to read religious literature, which was excluded, or minimal in other libraries, it was able to go some way to meeting their needs. Books on self-improvement were very common at this time; those who had little or no schooling had to resort to educating themselves through reading. Often working men formed mutual improvement societies or attended more formal educational institutes such as mechanics' institutes and church institutes. A certain degree of self-denial and such qualities as thrift and perseverance were required when individuals strove for knowledge and self-improvement under difficult circumstances such as lack of money and long hours of

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<sup>39</sup> Halifax Church Institute, *Halifax Guardian*, 36(1,871), 2 January 1869, 6

<sup>40</sup> Edward Green, *Local Libraries: their Origin and Progress*, 87.

work. Literature with advice on conduct and morality was common in the nineteenth century, and could be found particularly in libraries attached to churches and chapels. The most famous example was Samuel Smiles: *Self-help* published in 1859. It sold 20,000 copies in the first year, 55,000 before 1863 and 258,000 before 1905.<sup>41</sup> Smiles also gave evidence to the Select Committee on Public Libraries, as we have seen in the section on mechanics' institute libraries in Chapter 5.<sup>42</sup> *Self-help* was followed by other titles: *Character* 1871, *Thrift* 1875 and *Duty* 1880. Not only did self-help build character and increase knowledge, but also the sub-title of the book was *With Illustrations of Conduct and Perseverance*.<sup>43</sup> It provided examples of men who had risen from humble beginnings to become inventors or leading businessmen. Thus readers were not only being advised on how to improve themselves, but were inspired by the example of others.

### 6.1.3 St. Mary's Church, Illingworth Library

According to T.W. Shore's list of 1878, a Bray library was formed at St. Mary's Church, Illingworth, in 1840.<sup>44</sup> There is no mention of this library, however, in the history of the church written in 1924.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Richard D. Altick, *The English Common Reader. A Social History of the Mass Reading Public, 1800-1900*, 2nd ed., Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1998, 390.

<sup>42</sup> See above 5.7.1.

<sup>43</sup> Samuel Smiles, *Self-help; With Illustrations of Conduct and Perseverance*.

<sup>44</sup> T.W. Shore, *Old Parochial Libraries of England and Wales*, 152.  
See above 6.1.1.

<sup>45</sup> G.R. Oakley, *The Story of Saint Mary's Illingworth*, Halifax: F. King, 1924.



### 6.1.4 St. Peter's Church, Huddersfield Parish Library

A Bray library was established in Huddersfield in 1841 and was augmented in 1872.<sup>46</sup> It is not referred to in a major secondary work on the history of the church.<sup>47</sup>

There are no references to it in churchwardens' minutes, vestry minutes and other church records.<sup>48</sup> In 1873 the library comprising about 180 volumes was moved from the vestry of the parish church to the new building of the Huddersfield Church Institute. The clergy of the local deanery could borrow books and church institute members could consult them on the premises.<sup>49</sup>

### 6.1.5 Huddersfield Church Institute Library

The Huddersfield Church Institute was set up in 1860. There had been an earlier institute in 1852, but it had ceased to exist in 1855. A few early annual reports are extant and some annual meetings were reported in local newspapers. No minutes or catalogues have survived. As a Church of England institution one of the objects was 'The promotion of general knowledge in subordination to religion' and in the 1862 annual report this was emphasised:

...all churchmen must be keenly alive to the importance of promoting general knowledge *in subordination to religion*, especially as opposed to the secularising tendencies which now exist in many quarters.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> T.W. Shore, *Old Parochial Libraries in England and Wales*, 152.

<sup>47</sup> Philip Ahier, *The Story of the Three Parish Churches of St. Peter the Apostle, Huddersfield*, Huddersfield: Advertiser Press, 1948-50.

<sup>48</sup> West Yorkshire Archives, Wakefield Headquarters, D32/88, St. Peter's Church, Huddersfield, *Vestry Meeting Minutes 1855-1921*.

West Yorkshire Archives, Wakefield Headquarters, D32/89, St. Peter's Church, Huddersfield *Churchwardens' Minutes 1817-1942*.

<sup>49</sup> Huddersfield Church Institute and School Association, *Huddersfield Chronicle*, 2,047, 28 February 1874, 6.

<sup>50</sup> Huddersfield Church Institute, *Annual Report 1862*, 6.

Thus the church institutes not only provided religious literature, but also literature in many branches of knowledge; thus emphasising the part church institutes played in adult education. Education was under the auspices of the Anglican Church, unlike mechanics' institutes with their 'no religion, no politics' rule.

The *Huddersfield Daily Chronicle* taking a retrospective view of the institute in 1883 stated that:

At the time of its formation, and for many years after, Huddersfield was very indifferently supplied with reading rooms of any kind, and no doubt many persons subscribed to the Church Institute with little thought or care for any other object than that of participating in the benefits offered by the library...<sup>51</sup>

At the end of its first year the library held a few purchased books, periodicals and from the start had subscribed to a circulating library: W.H. Smith's. The institute had 199 members. It had a reading room with an "abundant supply of good newspapers and magazines."<sup>52</sup> Two years later the institute had increased its membership to 239 and the issue had risen to 1,812, although the number of books in the library was still under 100 and the issue comprised:

From the Permanent Library	230
From Messrs. Smith's Books	856
Periodicals, one month after publication	726
 TOTAL	 1,812 <sup>53</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Scraps and Hints, *Huddersfield Daily Chronicle*, 4,872, 16 March 1883, 3.

<sup>52</sup> Annual Meeting of the Huddersfield Church Institute, *Huddersfield Chronicle*, 616, 4 January 1862, 6.

<sup>53</sup> Huddersfield Church Institute, *Annual Report 1862*, 5, 7.

It was still necessary to use another library, W.H. Smith's, which had a far higher number of issues than the permanent collection. Clearly not only books were popular as periodicals were widely circulated. In 1865 the institute subscribed to 27 newspapers and 29 periodicals, some of which were religious. These included Anglican publications such as *The Churchman*, *Church Times* and *Church Institution Circular*, but most were general or literary works, for example, *Blackwoods Magazine* and the *Edinburgh Review*.<sup>54</sup> The library was augmented in 1865 by a legacy to the institute from Dr. Edmund Smith who gave £100. £50 was used to purchase 235 volumes "in all branches of literature". As no catalogues survive, the titles of the books are unknown. This led to an increase in the library book issue, which was 2,303 for 1865, of which 637 over a period of seven months, were from Edmund Smith's library.<sup>55</sup> As the list of periodicals and newspapers demonstrates, the subject matter was varied, and books in all branches of literature were bought by the Smith bequest.

It was men rather than women who benefited from the Church Institute. In 1867 there were 237 ordinary members, with only one lady, and 850 volumes in the library.<sup>56</sup> By 1870 the number of lady subscribers had risen to 14, but they were

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<sup>54</sup> Huddersfield Church Institute, *Annual Report 1864*, 19.

<sup>55</sup> Huddersfield Church Institute, *Annual Report 1865*, 6, 8.

<sup>56</sup> Huddersfield Church Institute, Annual Festival, *Huddersfield Examiner*, 17(851), 9 November 1867, 7.



subscribers to the library only, not to the institute. The total membership was 830 and women comprised only about 1.5%. The issue of books had reached 3,919:

General and Dr. Edmund Smith	2,461
Bull's [Circulating Library]	552
Periodicals	906
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,919<sup>57</sup></b>

Despite the increase in use, C.P. Hobkirk, author of the first history of Huddersfield: *Huddersfield. Its History and Natural History*, expressed the view at the annual meeting in 1870 that:

The Library...contained books which never left the shelves from year's end to year's end; and he had frequently heard parties say that they could not get hold of a book that they could read. There was a variety of books in the library, all very well for reference, or for a clergyman's library, and, although he would not say anything against those works, still they were not books which, after a day's work, members would care to read at home.<sup>58</sup>

But if the library was found wanting, it was still one of the best features of the institute. In a letter to the *Huddersfield Chronicle* the Reverend George Lawrence wrote that the complaint was often made that:

...our Institute is little more than a library and newsroom for the use of Churchmen.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Huddersfield Church Institute. Annual Meeting, *Huddersfield Chronicle*, 1,079, 17 December 1870, 6.

<sup>58</sup> Huddersfield Church Institute. Annual Meeting, 6.

<sup>59</sup> George Lawrence, Huddersfield Church Institute [Letter], *Huddersfield Chronicle*, 1,080, 24 December 1870, 6.

The development of the church institute was hindered by the small size of the building. In 1873 it moved to new premises in New Street where there were five rooms instead of three. The Huddersfield Bray Library was also moved there.<sup>60</sup>

By 1876 the issues had declined to 1,022 as the council discontinued their subscription to Mudie's Library spending the money instead on extra books.<sup>61</sup> This decline shows the dependency of the library on external sources. The subscription to Mudie's was re-instated the following year and the annual issue increased to 2,136: 1,859 from the general library and 277 from Mudie's.<sup>62</sup> In 1884 the issue had risen to 3,780 from the general library and 678 from Mudie's.<sup>63</sup> Whether for religious literature or simply 'entertaining works', some use was made of the Huddersfield Church Institute Library and whatever its shortcomings in size and content, it was clearly a source of education and entertainment for some members.

There were some similarities with a neighbouring church institute, Bradford Church Institute that was described in 1910 as having a "large library":

The Library is kept well supplied with the most recent works, as the Committee who superintend this branch of the Institute hold monthly meetings to decide upon the purchase of new books for the permanent Library, and to arrange the exchange of those obtained from Mudie's.

On the shelves will be found many volumes (theological, philosophical, etc.) of great use to the Clergy; but of especial interest and value to them is the Garnett Library, which is kept in the Council Room.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> See above 6.1.4.

<sup>61</sup> Huddersfield Church Institute. Annual Meeting, *Huddersfield Daily Chronicle*, 2,978, 21 February 1877, 3.

<sup>62</sup> Huddersfield Church Institute, *Huddersfield Daily Chronicle*, 3,829, 20 February 1878, 3.

<sup>63</sup> Huddersfield Church Institute. Annual Meeting, *Huddersfield Chronicle*, 5,495, 14 March 1885, 7.

<sup>64</sup> Bradford Church Institute, Bradford: Brocklehurst, 1910.

Clearly the theological books in the Bradford Church Institute were of interest and use to the clergy just as in Huddersfield the Bray library was largely for the clergy. Nevertheless, an interest in more recent works is evident as Mudie's library was used at Bradford as well as at Huddersfield. A further example of a similar institution making use of Mudie's library was at the Wakefield Church Instruction Institution.<sup>65</sup>

### 6.1.6 Slaithwaite Libraries

The library of Slaithwaite described in Chapter 2 was not widely known; it did not feature in *Notes and Queries*, for example, and did not receive recognition as an earlier church library until later.<sup>66</sup>

The ministers' library at St. James Church was augmented in 1843 by a gift from Hannah Mellor who was the niece of the Reverend John Murgatroyd. As noted in Chapter 3, he bequeathed his property to his niece rather than to the library.<sup>67</sup> She gave 30 books and her uncle's manuscripts to the ministers' library.<sup>68</sup>

Educational work and the formation of libraries in Slaithwaite owed much to the Reverend Charles A. Hulbert. Not only was he associated with education and libraries in connection with religious organisations, he was also involved in secular education. He was first president of the Slaithwaite Mechanics' Institution in 1847, but he only agreed to take office if the following rule was adopted:

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<sup>65</sup> William White, *Directory [1881]*, 1,149.

<sup>66</sup> See above 6.1.1.

<sup>67</sup> See above 3.8.1.

<sup>68</sup> West Yorkshire Archives, Wakefield Headquarters, D120/1, St. James Church Slaithwaite, *List of Books Presented by Miss Hannah Mellor 1842*.



That nothing contrary to the Holy Scripture or the Established Form of Religion should be admitted into the Library, Lectures or Meetings.<sup>69</sup>

There could be no charge of neglect under Hulbert's ministry as he paid for the rebinding of many of the books and a large bookcase to contain them.<sup>70</sup> It was obviously a collection that was being used, because in 1865 at a public meeting of the church ratepayers, Cripps' *A Practical Treatise relating to the Law of the Church and Clergy* and an ordnance map of the district were ordered for the ministers' library.<sup>71</sup> The map would have been useful for travelling throughout the chapelry. Much earlier at the beginning of his incumbency Hulbert had written:

The scattered nature and extent of the population committed to my charge, at first much discouraged my mind ...<sup>72</sup>

The church library was for the ministers' use and therefore would not have benefited the congregation directly, but they were to have their own library in 1839. Hulbert formed a church lending library, to which he gave 100 books and there were later additions from the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge and others. By 1850, however, it was not used as much as when it was first instituted.

Educational institutes connected with the Anglican Church also had libraries illustrating the part played by the church in education. At the Slaithwaite National School (later Lower Slaithwaite National School) the government inspector of

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<sup>69</sup> Charles A. Hulbert, *Annals of the Church in Slaithwaite*, 181.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid, 235.

<sup>71</sup> West Yorkshire Archives, Wakefield Headquarters, D120/21, St. James Church Slaithwaite, *Minute Book 1854-1954*.

Henry William Cripps, *A Practical Treatise relating to the Law of the Church and Clergy*, 4th ed., Sweet, 1863.

<sup>72</sup> Charles A. Hulbert, *Annals of the Church in Slaithwaite*, 181.

factories, Robert J. Saunders, recommended three times in the 1840s, that money from factory fines amounting to £25 be spent on books and maps for the general use of the school. Books, stationery and prizes were also to be bought for the poorer mill children.<sup>73</sup>

According to the government inspectors' reports 1850-1, the school was described as being "very well supplied" with books and apparatus.<sup>74</sup> Its library of about 600 books, however, was transferred to the Meeke and Walker's Institution on its foundation in 1859. This institution aimed to provide evening classes for young men and women, and as it was under the auspices of the church, scripture classes were included. The students had free admission to the library and about 50 used it, but the reading room was only used by a few of the more advanced students.<sup>75</sup> Four years later the library and reading room were not in a flourishing condition:

During the summer months the attendance at the reading-room was but small, and few availed themselves of the opportunity of having books from the library, free, but that branch of the Institution is again reviving; most of the members showing more interest than formerly. New books are much wanted, and donations of approved works will be thankfully received.<sup>76</sup>

Use of the church lending library in Slaithwaite had declined by 1850, neither was the library in the Meeke and Walker's Educational Institution always well used.

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid, 172, 180, 235.

<sup>74</sup> Committee of the Council on Education, *Reports by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools*, 1851-52, Vol. 2, 182.

<sup>75</sup> The Earl of Dartmouth at Slaithwaite. Annual Meeting of Meeke and Walker's Institution, *Huddersfield Chronicle*, 558, 24 November 1860, 8.

<sup>76</sup> Annual Meeting of the Meeke and Walker's Educational Institute, *Huddersfield Chronicle*, 765, 19 November 1864, 7.

Thus Slaithwaite had a variety of libraries connected with the Church of England. These included a ministers' library, a church lending library and a library in the Lower Slaithwaite National School, later transferred to the Meeke and Walker's Institution. In addition the Parker Library of religious works was set up in the church in 1888, which was the bequest of the Reverend Charles A. Hulbert. Worshippers at St. James Church were well supplied, but those living in the area who were members of other denominations or who did not attend any church regularly were not forgotten. In 1841 a district visiting society was formed, which distributed tracts in the area and a Bible and Prayer Book Association was started in 1846. By 1859:

about 1,500 Bibles, 900 Testaments, and 1,500 Common Prayer Books have been disposed of by sale or gift in the Parish and neighbourhood; besides three editions of the Selections of Psalms and Hymns, in use in the Church. These, above 5,000 sacred volumes average one for each individual in the district, and their pages, read or unread, will witness at the last day.<sup>77</sup>

The church was not only providing literature for regular churchgoers, but also books to the entire district and although some books were sold, others were provided free of charge. The influence of the Anglican Church in Slaithwaite extended through the district as it attempted to spread religious beliefs by the written word.

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<sup>77</sup> Charles A. Hulbert, *Annals of the Church in Slaithwaite*, 181, 202.



## 6.2 NONCONFORMIST CHAPEL LIBRARIES

### 6.2.1 Methodist Chapel Libraries

Many records of Methodist chapels survive especially in the area covered by Halifax parish, particularly from the later years of the nineteenth century and the twentieth century. There are records extant for at least 120 Methodist chapels in Halifax parish, at least two in every township.<sup>78</sup> Most are incomplete and many are records of baptisms, marriages and burials, which do not concern us here. Yet trustees' minute books and Sunday school records remain. Similar records survive for the Huddersfield area, although they are fewer in number.<sup>79</sup>

As there was a high attendance in most chapels, many books would have been needed for religious worship. Account books give examples of the purchase of Bibles, hymn books and prayer books. The account book of the Providence Wesleyan Chapel, Cragg Vale, Sowerby, for example, has the following entries:

Payments		£	s	d
30 June 1847	Bible Binding	-	5	4
14 November 1853	Pulpit Hymn Book	-	6	7½
3 August 1872	J. Greenwood's a/c singing books	1	0	0
19 December 1874	Wm. Waddington's a/c "printing"	-	9	6 <sup>80</sup>

As well as payments for Bible binding and a pulpit hymn book, the chapel had a special printing account with Mr. Waddington. Expenditure on printing often

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<sup>78</sup> West Yorkshire Archive Service, *Calderdale Archives 1964-1989*, 26-31.

West Yorkshire Archives Service *Calderdale Archives Supplement 1990-1994*, Wakefield: West Yorkshire Archive Service, 1995, 16-19.

<sup>79</sup> West Yorkshire Archive Service, *Kirklees Archives 1959-1989*, 19-25.

<sup>80</sup> Calderdale District Archives, HB:36, Cragg Vale, Providence Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, *Account Book 1836-1932*.

appears in accounts of chapel expenditure for items such as hymn sheets printed for special occasions like anniversaries and harvest festivals. Not only were books needed for the minister and congregation, but also for the choir. The trustees' minutes of the same chapel provide an illustration in September 1889:

24th September 1889

That the choir master be authorised to purchase 2 Houldsworth Psalmody about 3/6, 2 Wesleyan Tune Books about 3/- and 2 Manuscript Books about 2/- each.<sup>81</sup>

Some chapels even had choir committees. At Crosland Moor Wesleyan Reform Chapel, near Huddersfield, books purchased by the choir committee were transferred to the trustees in February 1863:

1 Pulpit Bible  
1 Pulpit Hymn Book  
9 Hymn Books for the Singers Pew  
5 Small Bibles  
1 vol Chetham's Psalmody  
2 vol Booths.<sup>82</sup>

Books were used as a means of participation in religious services. The Halifax and Huddersfield Methodist chapel records provide ample evidence of libraries and these numbers were not confined to these areas. In Leeds, for example, it was common practice for nonconformist chapels to have libraries. According to the 1849 Select Committee on Public Libraries *Report* Samuel Smiles, author of *Self-help*, was asked:

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<sup>81</sup> Calderdale District Archives, HB: 34/1, Cragg Vale, Providence Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, *Minutes of the Trustees, 1879-1924*.

<sup>82</sup> Kirklees District Archives, NM/HSC/III/2, Crosland Moor Wesleyan Reform Chapel, *Trustees' Meetings Minute Book 1857-85*.

Have not district libraries been established by Dr Hook, the rector of Leeds?<sup>83</sup>

He replied:

Yes, in connexion with the Church; those contain religious books intermingled with other books: there is also a library connected with almost every chapel, both dissenting and otherwise, in Leeds.<sup>84</sup>

Most Methodist chapels had substantial Sunday school libraries. Sometimes Sunday schools had two libraries: one for the scholars and one for the teachers. These libraries were therefore directed towards those who attended Sunday school rather than to the congregation as a whole: but in practice, some of these libraries were open to members of the congregation, for example, at Mill Bank Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, Sowerby, where in 1865 at the annual meeting of the Sunday school 6 June 1865 it was resolved that:

The congregation have the privilege of the School Library on the same condition as the teachers.<sup>85</sup>

At least one Sunday school library was not only open to the congregation, but to all who lived in the locality. For example, at the hillside village of Blackshaw Head, Stansfield Township, the Wesleyan Methodist Chapel Sunday school opened its library to all in connection with the Sunday school and neighbourhood in August 1867.<sup>86</sup> In small, scattered villages the work of the chapel extended to a much

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<sup>83</sup> Select Committee on Public Libraries, *Report*, 128.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid, 128.

<sup>85</sup> Calderdale District Archives, SBM:9, Mill Bank Wesleyan Chapel, Sowerby, *Sunday School Minute Book 1844-80*.

<sup>86</sup> Calderdale District Archives, MISC:394/1, Blackshaw Head Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, Stansfield, *Sunday School Minute Book 1862-75*.



wider community and the chapel library may have been the only source of reading for many people. A further example of congregational library use was at Hanover Road Methodist New Connexion Chapel, Halifax. Revised rules in 1873 stated:

A Circulating Library for the use of the Teachers, Scholars and Members of the Congregation shall be maintained out of School Funds, or in any other way the Teachers' Meeting may direct.<sup>87</sup>

This suggests that members of the congregation enjoyed library privileges on the same terms as Sunday school teachers and scholars, but decisions were taken by the teachers' meeting.

At Luddenden Foot United Methodist Chapel, the Sunday school library was also open to members of the congregation. At a teachers' meeting held 11 January 1862, it was agreed:

... that our Library be free to the schoolars [sic] and teachers and other Persons wishing to tak [sic] Books may do so by Paying 1 pence per month.<sup>88</sup>

So the library was available to others, but not on the same terms as the scholars and teachers. They had to pay to borrow books.

As the above examples illustrate, members of the congregation often had access to Sunday school libraries, but often scholars and teachers had priority. Yet to set up separate congregational libraries may have been simply to duplicate what already existed. Moreover, the Sunday school was an integral part of the chapel.

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<sup>87</sup> Hanover Street Methodist New Connexion Sabbath School, Halifax, *Rules, Revised: October 1873*, Halifax: Birtwhistle, 1873, 7.

<sup>88</sup> Calderdale District Archives, HB:72, Luddenden Foot United Methodist Chapel, *Sunday School Teachers' Meeting Minute Book 1853-67*.

Scholars and teachers were themselves members of the congregation and as the numbers were usually relatively high, they would comprise a sizeable proportion of it. Chapel membership and attendance at services were a continuation of their religious commitment. Having libraries specifically for Sunday school scholars and teachers, rather than the chapel as a whole underlines their educational function.

Ministers and Sunday school teachers had libraries in order to carry out their duties, but there is evidence of some library provision for local preachers. As early as 1830 at Mill Bank Wesleyan Methodist, Sowerby payments were made for a local preachers' library.<sup>89</sup> Similarly, at Stones Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, Ripponden, Soyland, accounts show payments to local preachers' library from 1824 to 1837.<sup>90</sup> It is probable that the preachers' library was common to both chapels given the itinerant nature of the preachers' calling. Use of the library may also have extended to chapels in the same area. Later, in the 1880s at the annual Sunday school teachers' meeting of 1882 at Lindley Methodist New Connexion Chapel, near Huddersfield a request was made for local preachers to use the Sunday school library.<sup>91</sup>

Another form of chapel library was in connection with young men's classes or mutual improvement societies, often an extension of the Sunday school. The Siddal Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, Southowram, Halifax, had a young men's class,

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<sup>89</sup> Calderdale District Archives, SBM:7, Mill Bank Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, Sowerby, *Account Book 1816-March 1885*.

<sup>90</sup> Calderdale District Archives, SB:218, Stones Wesleyan Chapel, Ripponden, Soyland, *Account Book 1811-59*.

<sup>91</sup> Kirklees District Archives, KC84/12, Lindley Methodist New Connexion Chapel, *Sunday School Minute Book 1880-6*.

which had a library with 75 volumes in 1885. At the annual meeting 24 December 1885 the secretary reported:

the circulation been [sic] far in excess, of previous years, and there is no wonder, when it includes such works, as Milton's and Wordsworth's Poem's, Shakespeare, The Scottish chiefs [sic] the lifes [sic] of such Men, as Henry M. Stanley, President Garfield, or from the Log Cabin to the White House ... Books on the History of the Natural and Animal kingdom and Moshem's [sic] Ecclesiastical [sic] History ... with Molesworth's History of England...<sup>92</sup>

It was only a small library, but was well used. All the volumes were of an educational or improving nature. Another example of a mutual improvement society attached to a chapel was at Stones Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, Soyland; it had a library as early as 1867, run by a librarian, an assistant and a library committee.

The minutes detail book purchases, for example, 11 August 1873:

The True Road to Success  
Handbook to the Desk, Office and Platform  
Enquire Within upon Everything  
Readings from the Best Authors<sup>93</sup>

There was clearly an element of moral teaching and self-improvement, as demonstrated by some of the titles: *From Log Cabin to the White House* and *The True Road to Success*.<sup>94</sup> It was considered that educational works of a moral

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<sup>92</sup> Calderdale District Archives, MISC:684/5, Siddal Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, *Young Men's Class Minute Book 1883-90*.

<sup>93</sup> Calderdale District Archives, SB: 225, Stones Methodist Chapel, Ripponden, Soyland, Mutual Improvement Society, *Minute Book 1866-77*.

<sup>94</sup> William Makepeace Thayer, *From Log-Cabin to White House; the Story of President Garfield's Life*, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1881.  
*The True Road to Success. By One who has Succeeded*, London: Bacon, [1872].



character and books on self-help could teach and inspire young men at a relatively early stage of their lives.

National organisations such as the Wesleyan Tract Society sold and distributed Bibles and tracts. The Wesleyan Tract Society published 36,787,111 tracts 1825-8 and the Religious Tract Society issued over 14,339,197 tracts in 1834 and over 18 million in 1838.<sup>95</sup> One notable distributor of books and tracts was the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, which had a Huddersfield branch. The Society's depository was listed at the bookshop of Thomas Smart in 1822.<sup>96</sup> According to the report for the Huddersfield area for 1828:

The committee has formed a much larger depository of books than it ever had, for the convenience of its members and subscribers. But the wants of the district require the establishment of one much larger, in order that every demand may find an immediate supply.<sup>97</sup>

A total of 1,837 items were distributed comprising 53 Bibles, 28 [New] Testaments, 318 Prayer Books and 1,438 books and tracts.<sup>98</sup> Even allowing for the fact that the directory covered not only the parishes of Huddersfield, Almondbury, Kirkburton and Kirkheaton, but also Mirfield and Hartshead, this still seems a large number.

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<sup>95</sup> J.M. Turner, *Methodist Religion 1791-1849*, ed. R.E. Davies and E.G. Rupp, *A History of the Methodist Church in Great Britain*, Vol. 2, 100-1.

<sup>96</sup> Edward Baines, *History, Directory and Gazetteer, of the County of York, Vol. 1 West Riding*, 207.

<sup>97</sup> Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, *Report of the Huddersfield District Committee of the Society, Read at the Anniversary Meeting, on Ascension Day, May 15, 1828*, Huddersfield: J. Lancashire, 1828, 11-12

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid*, 12.

The Hanover Street Methodist New Connexion Chapel, Halifax provides a local example of tract distribution. There were 19 tract distributors and 860 tracts in circulation in 1868:

There is evidence that the tracts and periodicals which are left from time to time at the houses of the people, have been received generally not only with courtesy, but that they have been perused with pleasure, and have been promotive of good.<sup>99</sup>

Tract distribution provides evidence that some Methodists sought to spread religious knowledge and practice beyond their own chapels.

### **6.2.2 Baptist Church Libraries**

Baptist churches and worshippers were fewer in number than Methodists and so there is less surviving documentation. Baptist church libraries were not, of course, confined to Halifax and Huddersfield; in London Baptists had a library at the Barbican by 1708.<sup>100</sup> Further evidence of the libraries of Baptist churches can be found in the nonconformist chapels and meeting house inventories carried out and published by the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England. Of 20 entries relating to libraries or books in the volume on the north of England only one was attached to a Baptist church at Hamsterley, County Durham. However, there had been an extensive theological library including works of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.<sup>101</sup> An example from further afield is Broughton Baptist Baptist churches in Hampshire where an extensive collection of books was bequeathed in

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<sup>99</sup> Hanover Street Methodist New Connexion Chapel, Halifax, *Yearbook 1868*, 31.

<sup>100</sup> Thomas Kelly, *Early Public Libraries*, 198.

<sup>101</sup> Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England, *An Inventory of Nonconformist Chapels and Meeting-Houses in the North of England*, London: HMSO, 1994, 64.

the early eighteenth century by John Collins. They have since been sold. In Newport, Hampshire a library was bequeathed by Sarah Silver Sparks to the General Baptist Church in 1847.<sup>102</sup>

The Baptist Church had a strong base in the Hebden Bridge area. As we have seen, it had literary associations with the Reverend John Fawcett with the book society, and with the Reverend Dan Taylor in Heptonstall forming an early book society.<sup>103</sup> Baptist church records are similar to those of Methodist chapels. Purchase of hymn books and chant books and other service books are recorded. Literature for worshippers extended beyond service books. At Birchcliffe Baptist Church, Hebden Bridge in May 1837, for example, it was:

agreed to house 500 tracts which treat on the duties of members in a christian church to give to members when they joine [sic] the church.<sup>104</sup>

Churches often had printing done for specific purposes. At Heptonstall Slack Baptist Church in 1881, it was agreed that in preparation for the New Year's Devotional Meeting anniversary 3 November 1881:

That books of words be provided and sold at a half-penny per copy.<sup>105</sup>

And a more unusual example for 3 March 1881:

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<sup>102</sup> Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England, *An Inventory of Nonconformist Chapel and Meeting-Houses in South-West England*, London: HMSO, 1991, 138, 155.

<sup>103</sup> See above 3.8.1.

<sup>104</sup> Calderdale District Archives. BBC:7, Birchcliffe Baptist Church, Hebden Bridge, *Church Meetings and Church Book 1831-60*.

<sup>105</sup> Calderdale District-Archives, HBR:8. Heptonstall Slack Baptist Church, *Church Meetings Minute Book 1877-1924*.



That 300 Copies of the New Rules of the Cemetery be printed.<sup>106</sup>

The importance of the choir was recognised when at the same church the choirs' books were kept separately:

Officers' Meeting April 28th 1879 ... That suitable Boxes be provided for the Music Books used by the Choir.<sup>107</sup>

Baptist Sunday schools, like their Methodist counterparts had libraries and sometimes rather than have a library of their own, the congregation had access to Sunday school libraries. Hope Baptist Church Sunday school, Hebden Bridge, had a Sunday school library catalogue printed in 1887. One of the rules was:

Any Member of the Congregation or School over Seven years of age shall be entitled to the use of the Books of the Library.<sup>108</sup>

Similarly, at the Lockwood Rehoboth Baptist Church near Huddersfield a Sunday school library was formed in 1847 for scholars and teachers, but also "any other friends."<sup>109</sup>

### **6.2.3 Congregational, Independent and Unitarian Chapel Libraries**

These chapels seem to have been better supplied with libraries than other nonconformist libraries with the exception of the Society of Friends. The Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England refers to books kept by Congregational and Unitarian chapels. Warwick High Street Chapel, Warwick which

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<sup>106</sup> Calderdale District Archives, HBR:8, Heptonstall Slack Baptist Church, *Church Meetings Minute Book 1877-1924*.

<sup>107</sup> Calderdale District Archives, HBR:10, Heptonstall Slack Baptist Church, *Officers' Meetings Minute Book 1877-97*.

<sup>108</sup> Hope Baptist Church Sunday School, Hebden Bridge, *Library Catalogue [1887]*.

<sup>109</sup> Kirklees District Archives, NB/R4, Lockwood Rehoboth Baptist Church, *Church Meetings Minute Book 1832-49*, 8.

was Presbyterian, later Unitarian, was presented with about 930 volumes from the library of the Reverend W. Field c.1843-52 to form a minister's library.<sup>110</sup> Liverpool Unitarian chapel, Ullet Road had a library and Rivington Presbyterian (later Unitarian) Chapel near Bolton in Lancashire had a library, which commenced c.1821.<sup>111</sup> Mill Hill Unitarian Chapel, Leeds, with its early association with Joseph Priestley, Minister 1767-73, had a library, minutes of which are extant 1843-87. They reveal a thriving library, which by 1858 had 720 volumes with an annual issue of 205.<sup>112</sup> The Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England reporting on the West Riding of Yorkshire included the Congregational or 'Heywood' Chapel at Northowram, which was reported to have "a Bible and Apocrypha, folio, printed by Charles Bill and the Executrix of Thomas Newcombe deceased" and the Lydgate Chapel, Holmfirth, which had "*The Works of the Most Reverend Dr. John Tillotson, Late Lord Archbishop of Canterbury, 3 vols. (1712-20).*" Both chapels have been referred to in Chapter 1.<sup>113</sup>

The Northgate End Unitarian Chapel, Halifax and the Highfield Independent Chapel, Huddersfield had early nonconformist libraries. At Northgate End there was a library from 1795 and book societies as described in Chapter 3.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England, *An Inventory of Nonconformist Chapels and Meeting-Houses in Central England*, 242.

<sup>111</sup> Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England, *An Inventory of Nonconformist Chapels and Meeting-Houses in the North of England*, 110, 139.

<sup>112</sup> Leeds District Archives, Mill Hill Unitarian Chapel, Leeds 66, *Library Committee Rules and Minute Book 1843-87*.

<sup>113</sup> Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England, *An Inventory of Nonconformist Chapels and Meeting-Houses in the North of England*, 264, 274.

See above 1.2.2

<sup>114</sup> See above 3.8.2



At Highfield a library was formed for the congregation in 1806 as noted in Chapter 3.<sup>115</sup> Many people's religious and social lives centred on their church or chapel, but, of course, they lived and worked outside in the secular world and were involved in other societies. Ministers, in particular, saw their responsibility as being not only to their congregations, but also to the community at large. The literary tradition at Northgate End was to extend beyond the chapel itself during the ministry of William Turner 1828-53. He played an active part in the work of the Halifax Circulating Library, the Literary and Philosophical Society and the Mechanics' Institution and was himself an author.<sup>116</sup> Moreover, his father the Reverend William Turner (1761-1859), who was Minister of the Hanover Square Unitarian Chapel, Newcastle-upon-Tyne 1782-1841, was prominent in the intellectual life of Newcastle. He was one of the originators of the literary and philosophical society there and lectured on science at the local mechanics' institute. He established a vestry library in 1787, which has been described in detail in a secondary article by Joan Knott.<sup>117</sup> So William Turner the younger was following the example of his father, whose literary and scientific interests he shared.

The library at Northgate End Chapel may have been little used in the 1880s. The chapel produced a magazine from 1886. It included 'library notes', for example, in March 1886: "Hints for readers on Sources of Information on Subjects

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<sup>115</sup> See above 3.8.1.

<sup>116</sup> See above 5.1.2, 5.4.1 and 5.7.2.

<sup>117</sup> Joan Knott, The Vestry Library of the Hanover Square Unitarian Chapel Newcastle-upon-Tyne, *Library History*, 1(5), Spring 1969, 153-63.



of the day," for example, "England, Ireland:-Property in Land". A few books were listed along with the libraries where they were held.<sup>118</sup> These were not books purchased for the chapel library, but were held in other libraries in Halifax such as the Mechanics' Institution library, the Literary and Philosophical Society library and the public library. Members of the congregation by this time may not have been dependent on the chapel library for their reading, especially with the introduction of a public library.

The Highfield Independent Chapel, one of the leading nonconformist churches in Huddersfield, was under the ministry of the Reverend Robert Bruce for 50 years: 1854-1904. He was involved in the educational and religious life of Huddersfield and was a strong advocate for establishing a public library in Huddersfield.<sup>119</sup> The Highfield Chapel was fortunate to have a minister with such an interest in education and libraries and a book society was set up at the chapel with Bruce as president. According to its rules:

...the object of the Society shall be, to afford its members an opportunity of seeing *First Class* works, as they issue from the press.<sup>120</sup>

It was open exclusively to members of the Highfield Chapel, although others could be added later from outside the church. It was to have 20 members. It did not have free membership as books had to be purchased, so there was a subscription rate of

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<sup>118</sup> Library Notes, *Northgate-End Chapel Magazine*, 3, March 1886, 48.

<sup>119</sup> "Huddersfield Examiner" Interviews. The Rev. Robert Bruce, M.A., D.D., *Huddersfield Examiner*, 11,957, 21 July 1906, Supplement, 5.

<sup>120</sup> Kirklees District Archives, Ni/Hi/12/1, Highfield Independent Chapel, *Miscellaneous Scrapbook*.

5/- per half year and a 5/- entrance fee. It was not a library as such, but like an eighteenth century book club, as older works were disposed of.<sup>121</sup>

This was not a popular society with a large membership. There was a limited number of members and it would have been confined to those who could afford the entrance fee and subscription, so the members would tend to be middle class. Moreover, the quality of the books was stressed, although no lists of purchases survive. The desire to read the late works “as they issue from the presses” suggests that the members may have already read many works so would be more educated than those who had simply attained basic literacy.

The chapel library was re-established in 1839 and a catalogue was published in 1850. It had over 220 titles, some of which were multi-volumed, arranged alphabetically on a variety of subjects including biography, history and travel, but were mainly religious.<sup>122</sup> It may have been little used, however, as it was presented to the Sunday schools committee in 1859. The former congregational library was known as the Select Library and was open to members of the congregation, teachers and senior scholars on payment of 1/- per annum and was regarded as a valuable supplement to the Sunday school libraries.<sup>123</sup> There is therefore evidence of libraries and associated literary interests like book societies of this type of chapel in

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<sup>121</sup> Kirklees District Archives, Ni/Hi/12/1, Highfield Independent Chapel, *Miscellaneous Scrapbook*.

<sup>122</sup> Highfield Independent Chapel, *A Catalogue of Books in the Highfield Chapel Library*, Huddersfield: Clayton, 1850.

<sup>123</sup> Kirklees District Archives, Ni/Hi/7a/i, Highfield Independent Chapel, *Sunday School Committee Minute Book 1846-64*.

Halifax and Huddersfield. However, they were not exceptional, but part of a broader trend, as similar work was being carried out in Leeds and Newcastle.

Other libraries formed in the Halifax and Huddersfield areas included the Harrison Road Congregational Chapel, Halifax. The rules drawn up in 1841 state that any member of the chapel could join, but there was a subscription of 5/- annually. There was a cheaper rate for Sunday school scholars. Although it was a chapel library, it was under the management of the Sunday school committee, so the needs of the scholars may have taken priority.<sup>124</sup> Some other churches had congregational libraries shared with the Sunday school. The Ramsden Street Independent Chapel, Huddersfield, for example, had both a Sunday school library and a library for the congregation. In 1866 the latter library was not well used:

The Congregational Library located in the vestry behind the Chapel, deserves to be much better known than it appears to be.<sup>125</sup>

A catalogue was published in 1876. According to the rules at the beginning of the catalogue, the library was open to teachers and senior scholars whom they had recommended free of charge, whereas other members of the congregation paid 6d a quarter. The library held 758 works, which were divided into the following categories:

Theology	23
Personal Religion, etc.	21
Biography	119
Travels and Missionary Works	35

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<sup>124</sup> Calderdale District Archives, MISC:831/2, Harrison Road Congregational Chapel, *Rules 1841*, 19.

<sup>125</sup> Kirklees District Archives, Ni/RS/8, Ramsden Street Independent Chapel, Huddersfield, *Committee Minute Book 1858-76*.



History	59
Biblical Works	75
Works on Teaching	15
Sermons and Lectures	28
Poetry	14
Miscellaneous Works	68
Tales etc.	299
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>756<sup>126</sup></b>

The holdings were general, but were strong in the field of religion, having sections on theology, religious matters, biographies of good and great men, Biblical works and sermons and lectures. Many of the other works were related to religion, such as travel, which is in the same category as missionary work. The books on teaching may have been useful to the Sunday school teachers. Some of the history books were related to the history of the church and several of the biographies were of religious figures. The largest category was “Tales” with 299. *Character, Self-help and Thrift* by Samuel Smiles, who has been noted in the section on the Halifax Church Institute Library, were placed in this category and it is evident from many of the titles of the tales that they included a moral message on conduct or self-improvement.<sup>127</sup> By 1893 the library had been revised and had an annual issue of 887, but was still not used as much as it might be:

The Librarian would respectfully remind the friends that the Library is open to all who attend the Chapel and would be glad to see the large and varied collection of books more freely used, there is no subscription and a fortnight is allowed for every book, without money

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<sup>126</sup> Ramsden Street Congregational Chapel, *Catalogue of the Ramsden Street Congregational Library [1876]*, Huddersfield: J. Crossley, 1876.

<sup>127</sup> See above 6.1.2.

and without price. Parents and friends avail yourselves of such a source of wholesome literature.<sup>128</sup>

At the Todmorden Unitarian Church a periodical library was begun in 1863 and magazines were distributed, for example, *Christian Freeman* and *Unitarian Herald*. The teachers always supported denominational papers.<sup>129</sup>

Some churches, like those of other denominations, had an interest in tract distribution. At the Ramsden Street Independent Chapel, Huddersfield a Christian Instruction Society was formed in the 1838, which distributed religious and moral literature in the form of tracts. Sykes in his history of the chapel published in 1925, described it as “A mode of religious activity formerly much in vogue”.<sup>130</sup> A tract society was re-formed 50 years later, in 1885 with “a number of zealous distributors”.<sup>131</sup>

At the Unitarian Church in Todmorden a tract society was formed in 1867 and “twelve young women” distributed ethical and religious tracts in the town. The Reverend Arthur W. Fox, Minister of the church 1898-1920, wrote that “they produced a considerable effect at the time”.<sup>132</sup> Not only was denominational literature being distributed amongst church members, but also religious tracts were distributed in the town, so Unitarian literature was widely available.

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<sup>128</sup> Kirklees District Archives, Ni/RS/12, Ramsden Street Independent Chapel, Huddersfield, *Committee Minute Book 1887-94*, 338-9.

<sup>129</sup> Arthur W. Fox, *Annals of the Todmorden Unitarian Congregation. A Centennial Sketch*, Todmorden: Waddington, 1924, 57.

<sup>130</sup> Arthur W. Sykes *Ramsden Street Independent Chapel*, Huddersfield: Advertiser Press., 1925, 27.

<sup>131</sup> Kirklees District Archives, Ni/RS/11, Ramsden Street Independent Chapel, Huddersfield. *Committee Meetings 1883-7*, 114.

<sup>132</sup> Arthur W. Fox, *Annals of the Todmorden Unitarian Congregation. A Centennial Sketch*, 58-9.



## 6.3 SOCIETY OF FRIENDS' LIBRARIES

### 6.3.1 Introduction

The Society of Friends, a small, but influential religious group, has taken care to keep and preserve its records, so it is relatively well documented. The history of local Quaker libraries is continued here from Chapters 2 and 3.<sup>133</sup> Lists of books received for distribution and for libraries appear in minute books. They were works written by or about Quakers, for example, the Halifax Preparative Meeting reported in February 1848 that during the previous year the *Memoirs of Samuel Fothergill*, James Backhouse's *Narrative* and *North American Indians and Friends* had been added.<sup>134</sup> In the year prior to February 1848 the *Journals* of Thomas Wilson and James Dickinson and Clarkson's *Portraiture of Friends* (abridged edition) were acquired for the library.<sup>135</sup> At the Brighthouse Preparative Meeting in April 1844 it was agreed to purchase the *Journals* of Thomas Shillitoe, Job Scott and Samuel Fothergill, John Barclay's *Letters and Memorials of Friends* by Susannah Corder. Older books which were missing were to be replaced: Hoyland's *Epitome*, Penn's *No Cross, No Crown*, and *The Lives of Thomas Ellwood, David Hall, Thomas*

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<sup>133</sup> See above Chapter 2.3.2 and 3.8.4.

<sup>134</sup> James Backhouse, *A Narrative of a Visit to the Australian Colonies*, London: Hamilton and Adams, 1843.

<sup>135</sup> Brotherton Library, Leeds University, EE21, Society of Friends, Halifax Preparative Meeting, *Minute 1836-50*, 148, 199.

Thomas Clarkson, *A Portraiture of Quakerism*, London: Longman, 1806.



Chalkley and Richard Davies.<sup>136</sup> Some printed catalogues are also extant. Libraries were not a new development during this period as there had been a library in connection with the Brighthouse Monthly Meeting from the beginning of the eighteenth century. It was usual for the preparative meetings to have libraries, but they were more recent in origin.

In addition to libraries, Friends' literature was distributed regularly among members, for example, in March 1861 in Halifax, 30 general epistles, 10 women's epistles, two lithographed minutes, 25 testimonies of deceased friends and 40 extracts of the proceedings of the yearly meeting were ordered from the monthly meeting.<sup>137</sup>

The Society of Friends differed from other churches in its form of church service. It had a silent form of worship with a lack of ritual, so minutes will obviously not record purchase of hymn books and prayer books; there were no choirs for which music was purchased. Neither were sermons preached and subsequently printed. This clearly emphasises the importance of denominational literature. Without a form of ritual and teaching during services, Quakers were more dependent for their religious knowledge on reading and not only the Christian religion, but also

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<sup>136</sup> Brotherton Library, Leeds University, AA11, Society of Friends, Brighthouse Preparative Meeting *Minute Book*, 1837-76, 71-2.

John Barclay, *A Selection from the Letters and Papers of the Late John Barclay*, London: Harvey and Darton, 1841.

Susanna Corder, *Memorials of Deceased Members of the Society of Friends*, 2nd ed., Lindfield, 1839.

John Hoyland, *An Epitome of the History of the World*, [London]: 1812.

William Penn, *No Cross, No Crown*, [London]: 1669.

<sup>137</sup> Brotherton Library, Leeds University, EE22, Society of Friends, Halifax Preparative Meeting *Minute Book* 1851-73, 195.

specifically Friends' beliefs. Records were kept, literature was distributed and libraries built up. Society of Friends' libraries belonged to the meeting; they were not Sunday school libraries. Quakers only had a few Sunday school libraries. In 1851 Sunday school enrolments were only 3,212 for the whole of England. Friends' Sunday schools comprised only 0.15% of the total and it has been claimed that they played almost no part in the history of Sunday schools.<sup>138</sup> The libraries of the Society of Friends were usually earlier in origin than those of other nonconformist churches. Most Friends' meetings had libraries, whereas only a minority of nonconformist chapels had libraries for all members. Moreover, the Friends' libraries were for the meetings and were not Sunday school libraries. They held denominational literature only, whereas other nonconformist church libraries often held works on a variety of subjects even fiction. Each Quaker meeting was not independent, but part of a network of meetings: monthly meetings who in turn were guided by quarterly meetings. These carried out distribution of literature and recommendations and instructions on libraries for preparative meetings.

In 1851 the York Quarterly Meeting responsible for all Yorkshire became concerned about libraries in monthly and preparative meetings and a report was prepared. The largest libraries were at York, Leeds and Hull with over 300 volumes each.<sup>139</sup> A report was made in 1858 of the libraries of the preparative meetings of

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<sup>138</sup> Thomas W. Laqueur, *Religion and Respectability. Sunday Schools and Working Class Culture 1780-1850*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976, 46, 48.

<sup>139</sup> W. Pearson Thistlethwaite, *Yorkshire Quarterly Meeting 1665-1966*, Harrogate: Privately printed, 1979, 295.



Brighouse Monthly Meeting. Figure 6/I shows the 17 meetings of Brighouse Monthly Meeting together with Settle Monthly Meeting and the number of volumes held in their libraries in 1858. The libraries belonging to the major towns of Bradford and Leeds were the largest, as might be expected, but Bradford had more volumes than Leeds due to a bequest of 195 volumes made the previous year. The number of volumes for Huddersfield is given as both 166 and 220, making it the third or fourth largest library. Halifax was only eighth behind Rawden, Gildersome and Lothersdale and Brighouse was tenth. The total number for 18 libraries over this wide area was only 2,354 or 2,408 averaging 131 or 134 volumes per library. Halifax, Brighouse and Huddersfield which were the preparative meetings in the Halifax and Huddersfield areas, had 401 (or 455) volumes averaging 134 (or 152) volumes per library slightly above average for the Monthly Meeting as a whole.

**FIGURE 6/I LIBRARIES BELONGING TO THE BRIGHOUSE MONTHLY MEETING 1858**

Brotherton Library, Leeds University, R11, Society of Friends, Brighouse Monthly Meeting, *Minute Book 1855-61*, 207a

Image removed due to third party copyright



Salterforth	35
Addingham	24
Keighley	20
Newton	8
Airton	41
Settle Monthly Meeting	75
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,354 (2,408)</b>
<b>Average</b>	<b>131 (134)</b>

Few of these libraries were sizeable, but they were specialised comprising Quaker and associated literature rather than a broad range of subjects, so the number of publications available would have been limited. Nevertheless, it was noted at the Monthly Meeting in June 1858 that several libraries were still unprovided with some valuable and important works both of a doctrinal and biographical character. It was recommended that the preparative meetings revise their catalogues.<sup>140</sup> A report on the catalogues was made in May 1859 when some of the libraries were considered too small. A list of books to be held in each library had been prepared. These reports illustrate the centralised organisation of Quaker meetings, which were not only required to have libraries, but libraries of a minimum size and holding specific titles. They were not only directed, however, but also supported, for the Monthly Meeting paid for the cost of additions to libraries “where needful”.<sup>141</sup> In this way

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<sup>140</sup> Brotherton Library, Leeds University, R11, Society of Friends, Brighouse Monthly Meeting, *Minute Book 1855-61*, 207a

<sup>141</sup> Brotherton Library, Leeds University, R11, Society of Friends, Brighouse Monthly Meeting, *Minute Book 1855-61*, 277-8.

they differed from other nonconformist churches where the formation and upkeep of libraries was due more to individual initiative than central direction.

### **6.3.2 Huddersfield Preparative Meeting Library**

At the time of the 1858 library report, the Huddersfield Preparative Meeting had the third or fourth largest library in the Brighouse Monthly Meeting.<sup>142</sup> In 1857-8 the annual loan rate was 74 with seven books issued to members, 39 to attenders and 28 to non-attenders. By 1863 the number had risen to 128 as members of the Quaker Paddock Sunday School were allowed to borrow books, so the issues were members 17, attenders 36, non-attenders 36, scholars 39. This was in sharp contrast to other nonconformist churches where the Sunday school library was usually the main and often the only library. But what is striking about the library issue is that most borrowers were not members of the Society of Friends. The library therefore had an important function in recruitment to membership of the Friends and informing outsiders about Friends' beliefs, as well as providing reading material to members who may have already been familiar with Quaker writings.

By 1866 the annual issue had declined to 50, despite use of the library by scholars and others. The librarians pointed out that the decline in issues was entirely due to the decrease in use by scholars and non-members, not the members themselves.<sup>143</sup> The number of issues was further reduced so in 1874-5, for example, it was only 15: nine to members and six to attenders. Such a low number of issues

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<sup>142</sup> See above 6.3.1 and Figure 6/I.

<sup>143</sup> Brotherton Library, Leeds University, EE3, Society of Friends, Huddersfield Preparative Meeting, *Minute Book 1853-70*, 93, 164, 209-10



prompted a revision of the catalogue. The librarians reported that there were 230 books in the catalogue, but the actual number was lower "as some of these have not been seen for a considerable time." In the following year it was reported that the catalogue had been revised and many of the books had been re-covered, re-numbered and re-bound. By this time the library comprised 213 volumes.<sup>144</sup>

### 6.3.3 Halifax Preparative Meeting Library

The Halifax Preparative Meeting issued a library catalogue in 1846. The content was almost exclusively related to the Society of Friends, as was the usual practice, with 80 works plus yearly meeting's epistles and 11 bound volumes of tracts. Some were biographical with 16 'lives' and nine journals; others were Quaker classics such as the writings of William Penn and the *Journal of George Fox*.<sup>145</sup> At the beginning of the Halifax Preparative Meeting library catalogue it was stated:

Persons desirous of obtaining information relative to the History and Principles of the *Society of Friends* may procure the Loan of any of the Works containing in this catalogue, on application to the Librarian, at the close of either of the Meetings for worship on the First Days, or to any Friend of Halifax Meeting on any other day of the Week<sup>146</sup>

The issue from the library was not high and in 1853 it was agreed to make some additions. The location of the books, perhaps affected by damp, was changed to a "drier situation" in the women's meeting house. Some books were to be half-bound

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<sup>144</sup> Brotherton Library, Leeds University, EE4, Society of Friends, Huddersfield Preparative Meeting, *Minute Book 1871-85*, 107, 136.

<sup>145</sup> Halifax Society of Friends, *A Catalogue of Books belonging to the Friends of Halifax Meeting 1846*, Halifax: Leyland, 1846, 4-5.

<sup>146</sup> Halifax Society of Friends, *A Catalogue of books belonging to the Friends of Halifax Meeting 1846*, 1.



and the following notice: “A library of books treating on the principles of the Society of Friends is kept on these premises; and may be had on loan by applying at the cottage, or of any member of the society” was to be made to publicise the library.<sup>147</sup>

The improvements seem to have had some effect on the loan rate as the issue was as high as 50 in 1855, but by 1861 the number had been reduced to 18 with only four being borrowed by members, the remainder being borrowed by non-members. The number of issues was as low as 16 in 1864, but there was a steady increase to 45 in 1868. Another stocktake of the library was carried out 1870-1 with new books added and the catalogue was revised.<sup>148</sup> The new catalogue was more extensive than the 1846 catalogue with its 80 works, as 171 titles were listed with the *Annual Monitor* from 1854.<sup>149</sup>

The catalogues show that the library was an important source of specialised religious literature, which was not always appreciated, as the book issue, although subject to fluctuations, was not high.

#### **6.3.4 Brighthouse Preparative Meeting Library**

The Brighthouse library was described in December 1852 as:

A Library of Books illustrative of the History, Biography and Principles of the Religious Society of Friends kept here for the use of

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<sup>147</sup> Brotherton Library, Leeds University, EE22, Society of Friends, Halifax Preparative Meeting, *Minute Book, 1851-73*, 43.

<sup>148</sup> Brotherton Library, Leeds University, EE22, Society of Friends, Halifax Preparative Meeting, *Minute Book 1851-73*, 95, 195, 269, 349, 371.

<sup>149</sup> Halifax Society of Friends, *Catalogue of Books in Friends' Meeting House Library, Halifax, 1870*, Halifax: F. King, 1870.

the Public, free of charge, apply within to Joseph Cooper who will furnish a catalogue.<sup>150</sup>

The library was overhauled in 1862 and a new catalogue was prepared. The catalogue was periodically revised and in 1870 it was reported that there were 156 volumes in the library and the issue of 80 to 40 readers comprised 11 to six members, 33 to 12 attenders and 36 to 22 non-attenders.<sup>151</sup> By 1880 the number of books had reached 206, although the loan rate was reduced to 56 with 21 readers. 23 volumes had been borrowed by non-attenders, 31 by attenders and two by members. In 1891 the library was again re-arranged and the books were labelled and re-numbered.<sup>152</sup> The revised catalogue of 1891 survives and comprises 266 volumes of Friends' literature. Many are biographies or autobiographies of Friends, for example, the *Memoirs* of Daniel Wheeler, S. Fothergill and Joseph Sturge. Some of the volumes were journals such as the *Friends' Herald of Peace* and the *Friends' Quarterly Examiner*.<sup>153</sup>

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<sup>150</sup> Brotherton Library, Leeds University, AA11, Society of Friends, Brighouse Preparative Meeting, *Minute Book 1837-76*, 168.

<sup>151</sup> Brotherton Library, Leeds University, AA11, Society of Friends, Brighouse Preparative Meeting, *Minute Book 1837-76*, 267, 364.

<sup>152</sup> Brotherton Library, Leeds University, AA12, Society of Friends, Brighouse Preparative Meeting, *Minute Book 1877-1915*, 38, 207.

<sup>153</sup> Brighouse Society of Friends, *Catalogue of Books, Brighouse Friends Preparative Meeting Library, Huddersfield Road [1891]*, Brighouse: Bayes, 1891.

## 6.4 ROMAN CATHOLIC LIBRARY

I have discovered only one reference to the existence of Roman Catholic libraries in the Halifax and Huddersfield areas. There was a library at the Catholic Association Rooms, Winding Road, Halifax in 1881.<sup>154</sup>

## 6.5 SUNDAY SCHOOL LIBRARIES

The importance of Sunday schools in basic education is referred to in Chapter 4 and a few early ones noted in Chapter 3.<sup>155</sup> Libraries were a significant element in Sunday school education and in the literary resources of churches and chapels. Their development was an important contribution to the growth of libraries for the working classes. Sunday schools were not always a substitute for day schools, however, as some children attended both types of school. As day schools increased in number this trend towards both day and Sunday attendance became more common and Sunday schools continued to flourish even after 1870, when elementary education in day schools became compulsory.

Children were able to supplement their class books by borrowing from the libraries. There were fewer day school libraries, especially at elementary level.<sup>156</sup> Many children may not have owned any books other than Sunday school 'prizes'. Poorer families often with several children may have been unable or unwilling to buy books for children. This emphasises the importance of Sunday school libraries,

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<sup>154</sup> William White, *Directory [1881]*, 1,425.

<sup>155</sup> See above 3.8.3 and 4.4.2.

<sup>156</sup> See above 5.3.



as they were the only libraries open to a sizeable proportion of the population, namely children mainly of the working classes. They were particularly important to girls, as fewer attended day schools than boys, so they were less likely to have alternative sources of literature. Adults, especially men, could buy their own books or pay a subscription to a mechanics' institute or commercial circulating library if they had the financial means, but children and most women had no such choice.

The Sunday school library, at least in nonconformist churches (excluding the Society of Friends) was usually the main library available to all. This shows how important churches and chapels were in the provision of education. Sunday school libraries were therefore important to children of the working classes both in elementary and religious education. Moreover, they were numerous.

Some references to libraries appear in books on Sunday schools. Thomas W. Laqueur in his study on Sunday schools and working class culture 1780-1850 makes few references to libraries, although he has a section on publications.<sup>157</sup> In general, library historians have tended to disregard the history of Sunday school libraries. Some research, however, has been carried out, for example, Louie Carr's 1987 M.L.S. thesis, which used some Huddersfield case studies.<sup>158</sup> Thomas Kelly in his work on early public libraries wrote:

It is evident, therefore, that the number of church, chapel and Sunday school libraries must by the mid [nineteenth] century have run into several thousands; ...<sup>159</sup>

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<sup>157</sup> Thomas W. Laqueur, *Religion and Respectability. Sunday Schools and Working Class Culture 1780-1850*, 113-9.

<sup>158</sup> Louie Carr, *Libraries in Sunday Schools*.

<sup>159</sup> Thomas Kelly, *Early Public Libraries*, 203.

Yet he covered Sunday school libraries in under a page. Sunday school libraries have therefore been underestimated, which could be accounted for if there was a dearth of primary material; yet extant Sunday school records for nonconformist chapels are abundant including library records. Libraries are also sometimes mentioned in local histories of Sunday schools or at a wider level in Sunday school magazines, for example, the *Sunday School Chronicle*, published from 1874 featured news and articles on libraries.

Religious literature in the form of moralistic fiction for working class children may seem of less consequence than science books published for the use of working men. Moreover, few Sunday school libraries, if any, remain; some of the Sunday schools have been disbanded and even many of the churches themselves have been closed. The type of literature, readers and subsequent decline of the Sunday schools and their libraries may have contributed to their relative neglect by general and library historians.

In common with other church members, Sunday school scholars participated in religious services, both in Sunday schools and in the main body of the congregation, so the purchase of hymn books appears frequently in Sunday school accounts. One example was at Crosland Moor Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, near Huddersfield in 1883:

11th June 1883 Resolved that we purchase Three Dozen Hymn Books  
for the use of the Scholars in the lower classes.<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>160</sup> Kirklees District Archives, NM/HSC/IV/9, Crosland Moor Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, *Sunday School Minute Book 1875-91*.



There was a strong musical element in church services and children did not simply receive a grounding in religion or teaching to read and write, they learnt how to sing. Heptonstall Wesleyan Methodist Chapel Sunday School, for example, has entries in its cash book for 3 March 1879 for a new tune book for 2s 4d.<sup>161</sup> A further example is Rodwell End Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, Stansfield, near Todmorden where 25 chant books were bought in January 1871 for the Sunday school at a cost of 4s 2d and a further two dozen were bought in October for 3s.<sup>162</sup>

Religious books were also purchased in quantity: Bibles, [New] Testaments and to a lesser extent catechisms for both class and service use. So at the Ebenezer Primitive Methodist Chapel, Halifax at the teachers' meeting 15 May 1843 it was resolved:

that 40 bibles and 40 testaments be purchased by George Hall...a Dozen small Bibles and a Dozen small Testaments be purchased.<sup>163</sup>

Similarly, at the Crosland Moor Wesleyan Methodist Chapel in July 1875 it was agreed that:

30 Bibles, and 2 dozen Testaments, 2 dozen Reading Books and 1 dozen no 2 Catechisms be purchased by James Beaumont.<sup>164</sup>

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<sup>161</sup> Calderdale District Archives, UC:29, Heptonstall Wesleyan Chapel, *Sunday School Cash Book 1863-86*.

<sup>162</sup> Calderdale District Archives, TM:123, Rodwell End Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, Stansfield, *Sunday School Finance Treasurer's Account Book 1863-80*.

<sup>163</sup> Calderdale District Archives, HM:40, Halifax Ebenezer Primitive Methodist Chapel, *Committee and Teachers Minute Book 1833-47*

<sup>164</sup> Kirklees District Archives, NM/HSC/IV/9, Crosland Moor Wesleyan Methodist Church, *Sunday School Minute Book 1875-1891*.



Materials for Sunday schools were available from national organisations such as the Sunday School Union as noted in Chapter 3.<sup>165</sup> In 1850, for example, it produced 140,000 spelling books, 188,000 reading texts, 12,000 mathematical and grammar books and sold a total of 349,000 texts nationally.<sup>166</sup> The sale of school materials was therefore a national and large-scale operation. Halifax and Huddersfield followed the national trend in the use of these publications. One example is at Southowram Church Lane United Methodist Chapel Sunday school when 2 dozen spelling books were bought in October 1844. At a meeting 6 September 1852, it was agreed:

That their [sic] be 2 doz of Spelling Books purchased [sic]<sup>167</sup>

The misspellings in the minute books suggest that the teachers may have attained little beyond basic literacy themselves. The purchase of this type of reading matter tends to appear in the earlier records, but as late as the 1860s spelling books still feature in the accounts at Rodwell End Wesleyan Methodist Chapel. An entry appears in the finance book for “2 dozen Bibles and 6 spelling books” in November 1878, so the Sunday school may still have been teaching reading and writing even at this time.<sup>168</sup>

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<sup>165</sup> See above 3.8.3.

<sup>166</sup> Thomas W. Laqueur, *Religion and Respectability. Sunday Schools and Working Class Culture 1780-1850*, 257.

<sup>167</sup> Calderdale District Archives, ME:38, Southowram Church Lane United Methodist Chapel, *Sunday School Minute Book 1835-71*.

<sup>168</sup> Calderdale District Archives, TM:123, Rodwell End Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, Stansfield, *Sunday School Finance Treasurer's Account Book 1863-80*.

Many teachers may have received little education so as well as reading books and other class books for children, teachers also had their own reading materials. Sometimes lesson notes were purchased, for example, for the Sunday school at the Bethesda Methodist Chapel, Elland in November 1875. At a teachers' meeting it was resolved:

That we use the Sunday School Union arrangements of Lessons during the ensuing year, and that we purchase 300 Copies of the Lists of Lessons.<sup>169</sup>

At Lumbutts United Methodist Chapel Sunday school, Langfield in December 1863 it was agreed:

That 125 Lesson Sheets be bought.<sup>170</sup>

Many Sunday schools circulated and sold magazines, which benefited both pupils and teachers. Thomas W. Laqueur identified as many as 42 Sunday school magazines for scholars and 12 for Sunday school teachers, which began publication between 1805 and 1848.<sup>171</sup> At Lockwood Methodist New Connexion Chapel, near Huddersfield, a committee of teachers and elder Sunday school scholars was set up in 1856. It had the responsibility of delivering magazines to subscribers. 18 journals

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<sup>169</sup> Calderdale District Archives, EMR:33, Bethesda Methodist New Connexion Chapel, Elland, *Sunday School Teachers' Meeting Minute Book 1873-85*.

<sup>170</sup> Calderdale District Archives, MISC:654/1, Lumbutts United Methodist Chapel, *Sunday School Teachers' Minute Book 1856-66*.

<sup>171</sup> Thomas W. Laqueur, *Religion and Respectability. Sunday Schools and Working Class Culture, 1780-1850*, 254-6.



are listed in the minute books including the *Child's Magazine*, *Teachers Offering*, *Juvenile Missionary Magazine* and the *Bible Class Magazine*.<sup>172</sup>

The Milton Congregational Church, Huddersfield had both a congregational library for use of teachers and elder Sunday school scholars and a separate library for the junior scholars. Additionally, the church had a periodicals department through which in 1886, for example, 100 scholars and teachers were supplied with 1,000 magazines with a profit of 8s 6d made on the sale.<sup>173</sup> Children therefore purchased magazines and sometimes other reading material from churches. The amount could be quite substantial, for example, at another congregational church: the Harrison Road Congregational Church, Halifax it was reported as early as 1838:

During the past year, 4 Bibles, 5 Testaments, 59 Hymn Books, 440 Magazines, and a considerable number of small books and tracts have been subscribed for by the Scholars. Several of the scholars have obtained Bibles, with marginal references and notes, which they use at home...<sup>174</sup>

However, not all children would have the means to purchase this literature, indeed one of the advantages of Sunday schools was that attendance was free, whereas some day schools charged fees. The presentation of Sunday school prizes or reward books was widespread. Poor children might at least possess a few books of this type. The prize books were not, however, merely donations to those who could not afford to buy any books; they were 'rewards' for attendance and behaviour and thus provided

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<sup>172</sup> Kirklees District Archives, NMW/HSC/XX/3, Lockwood Methodist New Connexion Chapel, *Sunday School Minute Book 1848-59*.

<sup>173</sup> Kirklees District Archives, Ni/M/28, Milton Street Congregational Church, *Sunday School Minute Book 1881-8*, 222.

<sup>174</sup> Harrison Road Congregational Church, Halifax, *Report 1838*, 27.



an incentive for good conduct. In 1854 when there was a problem with punctuality at Paddock Wesleyan Methodist Chapel Sunday School, the teachers' meeting attempted to improve the situation by offering reward books:

Teachers Meeting held 11 September 1854

... This meeting regrets that many of the Scholars are very late... their attendance at School, and in order to induce them to be more punctual agrees that every scholar who shall be present at the time for opening the School Morning and Afternoon every Sunday for the next three months shall be presented with a small book as a Reward.<sup>175</sup>

Reward books were not always story books similar to those found in Sunday school libraries as might be expected: sometimes hymn books were given as prizes. At Southowram Church Lane Methodist Chapel Sunday School at the quarterly meeting of the teachers and managers of the Sunday school in October 1844, it was agreed:

That the old Bibles and testaments [sic] be given as rewards.<sup>176</sup>

The purchase of reward books appears in Sunday school records. Hymn books are noted as rewards, for example, at the Heptonstall Wesleyan Methodist Chapel Sunday school hymn books as rewards appear in the cash book so listed in the expenditure is:

24 March 1865 Hymn Books as Rewards - 9 - 177

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<sup>175</sup> Kirklees District Archives, NM/WM/P/2/1, Paddock Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, Huddersfield, *Sunday School Minute Book 1853-62*.

<sup>176</sup> Calderdale District Archives, ME:38, Southowram Church Lane United Methodist Chapel, *Sunday School Minute Book 1835-71*.

<sup>177</sup> Calderdale District Archives, UC:29, Heptonstall Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, *Sunday School Cash Book 1863-86*.

In 1882 at Illingworth Moor Wesleyan Methodist Chapel Sunday School, Ovenden, Halifax most of the reward books given were hymn books with a few Bibles and other books. By 1883, however, these were children's educational and story books, but they had a strong religious content.<sup>178</sup> The purpose of the instructive works, and even those which were entertaining, was to teach good moral lessons, they would nevertheless, be additions to the limited number of books to be found in most working class households.

Another type of church and Sunday school expenditure was stationery and printing. Events like Sunday school anniversaries were well attended and special programmes sometimes printed, providing local printers with ample trade. At Mount Zion Primitive Methodist Chapel, Mytholmroyd, Halifax parish, for example, 700 hymn sheets and 170 circulars were printed for the Sunday school anniversary in 1850.<sup>179</sup>

As noted in Chapter 4 hundreds attended Sunday school anniversary services, but thousands took part in the famous Halifax Sunday School 'sings'. The 1866 'Sing' was reported in the national magazine: *The Illustrated London News*.<sup>180</sup> The 1876 'Sing' was detailed in the *Sunday School Chronicle* and it was not only of interest to Halifax people as:

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<sup>178</sup> Calderdale District Archives, IMO:1, Illingworth Moor Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, *Sunday School Books and Reward Books 1882-91*.

<sup>179</sup> Calderdale District Archives, HB:105, Mount Zion Primitive Methodist Chapel, Mytholmroyd, *Treasurer's Account Book 1841-90*.

<sup>180</sup> Halifax Sunday-School Jubilee Commemoration, *The Illustrated London News*, 48(1,374), 9 June 1866, 566.



Ardent Sunday school workers were present from all parts of the country, and expressed themselves to be more than satisfied with all they saw and heard.<sup>181</sup>

The music was printed in full vocal score and 25,000 copies were sold in the schools at 2d a copy. 25,000 copies of the words were also sold at ½d each.<sup>182</sup> This admittedly was an exceptional example of Sunday school printing, confirming the importance of Sunday schools in Halifax. The large number of copies purchased by the schools demonstrates the extent to which Sunday school children were able to read.

There is, therefore, sufficient evidence from Sunday school records of different types of literature being bought for both Sunday school scholars and teachers: hymn books, music books, Bibles, spelling books, reading books, lesson guides for teachers, magazines and reward books. In addition to buying all these reading materials, Sunday schools produced their own in the form of hymn sheets and Sunday school anniversary programmes, which were printed locally. Although not all Sunday schools would have such a wide range of books, the distribution of books as Sunday school prizes was widespread and some books would be needed for class use.

All this printed material assumes the ability to read, but not all children would be able to read especially earlier in the period. As stated in the educational background in Chapter 4 in 1843, it was estimated that in Halifax parish only 14,265

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<sup>181</sup> Halifax. Commemoration of the Sunday School Jubilee, *Sunday School Chronicle*, 3(87), 16 June 1876, 393.

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid*, 393.



of 28,346 children, just over half, were able to read the scriptures, while a slightly higher proportion: 7,221 of 12,946 in Huddersfield could read.<sup>183</sup> Although the position undoubtedly improved later in the century, some children would still be unable to read the Bible, or their Sunday school prize books.

To encourage reading of appropriate material by their students, not only was there a variety of reading matter used within Sunday schools, but many also had libraries. As early as 1833 the *Education Enquiry* had a question on school libraries, and the West Riding of Yorkshire was second only to Lancashire with 8.34% of schools having a library.<sup>184</sup> This report gives details of all the day and Sunday school libraries in England and Wales. It is therefore a useful source of information, showing that the work of Sunday schools was national and what was happening in the Halifax and Huddersfield parishes was happening elsewhere.

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<sup>183</sup> See above 4.4.2.

<sup>184</sup> See above 5.3.

# **FIGURE 6/II LIBRARIES IN SUNDAY SCHOOLS 1833 - HALIFAX PARISH**

House of Commons, *Abstract of Answers and Returns on the State of Education in England and Wales*, 1833, 1835, (HCP62), Vol. III, XLIII, 1,164-8.

Denomination	Sunday Schools	Libraries
Church of England	18	5
'Dissenter'	8	-
'Methodist'	9	2
Wesleyan Methodist	21	14
Methodist New Connexion	5	2
Primitive Methodist	4	-
'Baptist'	8	-
General Baptist	5	-
Particular Baptist	4	-
Independent	8	1
Unitarian	2	2
All denominations	6	2
Denomination unspecified	12	3
Day and Sunday school	2	1
Day and Sunday school (Church of England)	-	-
Day and Sunday school (Methodist)	2	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>32</b>

# **FIGURE 6/III LIBRARIES IN SUNDAY SCHOOLS 1833 – TODMORDEN CUM WALSDEN TOWNSHIP, ROCHDALE PARISH**

House of Commons, *Abstract of Answers and Returns on the State of Education in England and Wales*, 1833, 1835, (HCP62), Vol. I, XLI, 459.

Denomination	Sunday Schools	Libraries
Church of England	2	-
Wesleyan Methodist	2	1
Methodist New Connexion	1	1
Primitive Methodist	1	-
All denominations	1	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>2</b>

**FIGURE 6/IV LIBRARIES IN SUNDAY SCHOOLS 1833-ALMONDSBURY PARISH**

House of Commons, *Abstract of Answers and Returns on the State of Education in England and Wales, 1833, 1835*, (HCP62), Vol. III, XLIII, 1,146-7.

<b>Denomination</b>	<b>Sunday Schools</b>	<b>Libraries</b>
Church of England	8	-
'Dissenter'	-	-
'Methodist'	4	1
Methodist New Connexion	3	-
Primitive Methodist	-	-
'Baptist'	-	-
General Baptist	-	-
Particular Baptist	2	-
Independent	2	-
Unitarian	-	-
All denominations	2	-
Denomination unspecified	13	1
Day and Sunday school	1	1
Day and Sunday school (Church of England)	-	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>3</b>



**FIGURE 6/V LIBRARIES IN SUNDAY SCHOOLS 1833 - HUDDERSFIELD PARISH**

House of Commons, *Abstract of Answers and Returns on the State of Education in England and Wales, 1833, 1835*, (HCP62), Vol. III, XLIII, 1,170-1.

Denomination	Sunday Schools	Libraries
Church of England	5	2
'Dissenter'	-	-
'Methodist'	3	1
Wesleyan Methodist	3	-
Methodist New Connexion	-	-
Primitive Methodist	-	-
'Baptist'	1	-
General Baptist	-	-
Particular Baptist	1	-
Independent	2	1
Unitarian	-	-
All denominations	3	-
Denomination unspecified	2	-
Day and Sunday school	2	-
Day and Sunday school (Church of England)	1	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>5</b>

**FIGURE 6/VI LIBRARIES IN SUNDAY SCHOOLS 1833 - KIRKBURTON PARISH**

House of Commons, *Abstract of Answers and Returns on the State of Education in England and Wales, 1833, 1835*, (HCP62), Vol. III, XLIII, 1,173-4.

Denomination	Sunday Schools	Libraries
Church of England	2	-
'Dissenter'	1	1
'Methodist'	1	-
Wesleyan Methodist	2	-
Methodist New Connexion	-	-
Primitive Methodist	-	-
'Baptist'	-	-
General Baptist	-	-
Particular Baptist		
Independent	1	-
Unitarian	-	-
All denominations	-	-
Denominations unspecified	2	-
Day and Sunday school	2	1
Day and Sunday school (Church of England)	1	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>3</b>

**FIGURE 6/VII LIBRARIES IN SUNDAY SCHOOLS 1833 - KIRKHEATON  
PARISH**

House of Commons, *Abstract of Answers and Returns on the State of Education in England and Wales, 1833, 1835*, (HCP62), Vol. III, XLIII, 1,174.

Denomination	Sunday Schools	Libraries
Church of England	1	-
'Dissenter'	-	-
'Methodist'	3	-
Wesleyan Methodist	-	-
Methodist New Connexion	-	-
Primitive Methodist	-	-
'Baptist'	-	-
General Baptist	-	-
Particular Baptist	-	-
Independent	-	-
Unitarian	-	-
All denominations	-	-
Denomination unspecified	1	
Day and Sunday school	-	-
Day and Sunday school (Church of England)	-	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>



**FIGURE 6/VIII LIBRARIES IN SUNDAY SCHOOLS 1833 - HUDDERSFIELD PARISHES**

House of Commons, *Abstract of Answers and Returns on the State of Education in England and Wales, 1833, 1835*, (HCP62), Vol. III, XLIII, 1146-7, 1170-1, 1173-4.

Denomination	Sunday Schools	Libraries
Church of England	16	2
'Dissenter'	1	1
'Methodist'	11	2
Wesleyan Methodist	8	-
Methodist New Connexion	-	-
Primitive Methodist	-	-
'Baptist'	1	-
General Baptist	-	-
Particular Baptist	3	-
Independent	5	1
Unitarian	-	-
All denominations	5	-
Denomination unspecified	18	1
Day and Sunday school	5	2
Day and Sunday school (Church of England)	2	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>11</b>

Figures 6/II-6/III show there were 32 Sunday school libraries in Halifax parish in 1833 and if the neighbouring township of Todmorden cum Walsden is included the number is 34 from a total of 121 Sunday schools. Figures 6/IV-6/VIII show that the parishes of Almondbury, Huddersfield, Kirkburton and Kirkheaton in the Huddersfield area had 75 Sunday schools with 11 libraries.

Most Sunday schools did not have libraries. However, the number may have been understated, as the term library was not always used. Thus an Anglican Sunday

school in Rastrick Chapelry, Halifax parish lent tracts to children, but did not have a library as such and at a day and national Sunday school in Golcar township in the parish of Huddersfield books were purchased by collection.<sup>185</sup> Where libraries existed, they are merely described as lending libraries. There is little information on the size, content or issue of the libraries; sometimes a library may be referred to as a small library or as a lending library indicating at least that some of the books were being borrowed and read, but an estimate of their use and usefulness cannot be made. Yet the very existence of as many as 32 Sunday school libraries in 1833 in Halifax parish suggests widespread provision of reading for working class children and even the Huddersfield parishes with fewer libraries still had 11.

Provision of Sunday school libraries varied widely from parish to parish and they were not divided proportionately between denominations. Of 34 libraries in the Halifax area 20 were located in Methodist Sunday schools. Wesleyan Methodist Sunday schools with 15 were particularly strongly represented. Yet Huddersfield did not follow the same pattern. Only two of 11 libraries were known to be Methodist, but there were four libraries attached to Church of England Sunday or day and Sunday schools. This disparity can possibly be explained by the higher attendance at Anglican churches in the Huddersfield area than in the Halifax area, which was stronger in nonconformity. Not all denominations were represented in provision of

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<sup>185</sup> House of Commons, *Abstract of Answers and Returns on the State of Education in England and Wales, 1833*, Vol. III, 1,170, 1,197.



Sunday school libraries for none of the 21 Baptist Sunday schools in the Halifax and Huddersfield areas reported having a library.

Another source of information on Sunday schools and their libraries is a series of reports on education published by the Manchester Statistical Society c.1839-40. They give information on Sunday schools in some areas, although not in Halifax and Huddersfield. In 1834 68 of the 86 Sunday schools in Manchester had libraries.<sup>186</sup> Another report covers York where in 1836 15 of 24 Sunday Schools had libraries.<sup>187</sup>

The number of Sunday school libraries increased when the Sunday School Union distributed 2,100 libraries of 100 to 200 books to Sunday schools within the 15 years following the publication of the educational returns. The Religious Tract Society also gave away libraries of a comparable size.<sup>188</sup> These custom-built libraries contrast sharply with the miscellaneous and usually unplanned nature of many society and institutional libraries, whose contents were often determined by donations. If collections were only 100 to 200 books, it suggests that Sunday school libraries were only small. The *Sunday School Chronicle* reported news from individual Sunday schools and Sunday school unions: mainly reports of annual

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<sup>186</sup> Manchester Statistical Society, *Report of a Committee of the Manchester Statistical Society, on the State of Education in the Borough of Manchester, in 1834*, 2nd rev. ed., London: James Ridgway; R.H. Moore; Manchester: Bancks, 1837, 40.

<sup>187</sup> Manchester Statistical Society, *Report of a Committee of the Manchester Statistical Society, on the State of Education in the City of York in 1836-37*, London: James Ridgway; R.H. Moore; Manchester: Bancks, 1837, xi.

<sup>188</sup> Thomas W. Laqueur, *Religion and Respectability. Sunday Schools and Working Class Culture 1780-1850*, 117.



meetings with only occasional references to libraries. The journal, however, by its inclusion of comment on libraries and letters provides proof that they were an accepted feature of Sunday school life. In Halifax the local Sunday school union was the fourth largest in England by 1851; even the area which it covered was not coterminous with Halifax parish. It was for Halifax only. Elland and Hebden Bridge had their own union.<sup>189</sup> The Halifax Sunday School Union agreed in 1851 that:

...if any money surplus be left after the celebration of the Jubilee, the same shall be equally distributed to the various schools joining in the celebration according to the number of their scholars. The money to be expended in the purchase of books for the Library of such School, where one is already established; or if the School have no Library then the money is to go towards providing one, but if this be not practicable then the money to be expended in the purchase of books for the general use of the Institution.<sup>190</sup>

In Huddersfield there was a Sunday School Union in 1822 which ceased, but was later re-founded in 1859 as a Wesleyan Methodist union. There was thus a sharp contrast with Halifax, which had a strong Sunday School Union throughout this period and which may partly explain why the *Education Enquiry* in 1833 found more libraries in Halifax than Huddersfield. The Huddersfield Sunday School Union took an interest in libraries and at a quarterly meeting in January 1864 at Cowms, Kirkheaton a paper on "The Sunday school library: its use and abuse" was given by Alfred Jessop followed by a discussion. The schools gave regular reports to the

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<sup>189</sup> E.V. Chapman, *Two Hundred Years of Sunday Schools*, 8.

<sup>190</sup> Calderdale District Archives, SOC:21/1, Halifax Sunday School Union, *Centenary and Jubilee Minute Books 1852-66*.

Sunday School Union, which included questions on the number of volumes in the library and the number of readers.<sup>191</sup>

Figure 6/IX gives some indication of Sunday school size and library use in 1879 in the Huddersfield area. Only nonconformist Sunday schools are included. Three Anglican Sunday schools supplied details for the Sunday School Union statistical returns, but they are omitted from Figure 6/IX.

**FIGURE 6/IX SUNDAY SCHOOLS - HUDDERSFIELD CIRCUIT LIBRARIES  
1879.**

Robert Bruce, *Huddersfield Sunday School Centenary Memorial. A Brief Account of the Origin and Early History of Sunday Schools in the Borough of Huddersfield*, Huddersfield: J. Crossley, 1880, 38-9, 42-3.

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\*Where figures are available: Baptist for six libraries, Methodist for 20 libraries, various for three libraries and total for 37 libraries.

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<sup>191</sup> Kirklees District Archives, N/QSMSS/1, Huddersfield Wesleyan Methodist Sunday School Union, *Secretary's Minute Book for the Huddersfield First Circuit Instituted March 29th 1859-74*.



The number of Sunday school libraries had increased markedly from 11 in the Huddersfield parishes in 1833 including four Church of England libraries to 49 in Huddersfield Borough in 1879. This increase is even more remarkable as the *Education Enquiry* of 1833 covered a wider area: Almondbury, Huddersfield, Kirkburton and Kirkheaton whereas the libraries in the 1879 survey covered a smaller area: Huddersfield Borough, so several sizeable Sunday school libraries were omitted.<sup>192</sup> The overall number of volumes for all libraries was much higher than the Huddersfield Subscription Library and the library of the Huddersfield Mechanics' Institution. No type of institutional library was as well represented in Huddersfield as the Sunday school library. Although there were mechanics' institute libraries, literary association libraries and commercial circulating libraries in Huddersfield, they were far fewer in number. The extent and significance of Sunday school libraries is evident from both the total number of volumes and the number of individual libraries. The total issue, which is known for 37 libraries, was 42,888. Some borrowers may have been teachers, members of the congregation and others. Yet a total issue as high as 42,888 suggests that possibly thousands of children benefited from Sunday school libraries and learning. The number of volumes and issues would have been even higher had Anglican Sunday schools also been included.

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<sup>192</sup> Edward Royle, *Religion in Huddersfield since the Mid-Eighteenth Century*, 133.



Most libraries were fairly small, yet three had over 1,000 volumes and a further 10 had 500 or more. Methodists were well provided with Sunday school libraries having 29 of the 49 in Figure 6/IX, although they were divided among five different Methodist denominations. The Independent churches, however, had the largest libraries. The Society of Friends with one library also had a relatively high issue. These were locally compiled statistics. There are no national statistics from which comparisons can be made, but by this time Sunday school libraries were well established.

Evidence for Sunday school library contents and administration is included in church and chapel records. As there are few surviving records of Anglican Sunday schools, only nonconformist Sunday schools are used here as examples. Occasionally Sunday schools had more than one library, both a teacher's library and a scholar's library, although this does not appear in either the 1833 *Education Enquiry* or the 1879 Huddersfield Sunday school statistics. Sunday school libraries were particularly important for women Sunday school teachers who were less likely than their male co-workers to be members of secular organisations like literary and philosophical societies and mechanics' institutes. The Halifax Sunday School Union recognised the need for books for teachers as it had its own Teachers' Reference Library. £20 was spent on new books in 1884.<sup>193</sup> At the Ebenezer Primitive Methodist Chapel Sunday School, Halifax, it was agreed at the teachers' meeting in

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<sup>193</sup> Sunday School Unions, Halifax, *Sunday School Chronicle*, 14 (500), 17 April 1885, 207.

August 1838 to have a teachers' library and a scholars' library.<sup>194</sup> At Lindwell Primitive Methodist Chapel, Greetland, a teachers' library was founded in 1840 and a list of 36 members is given in the minutes: both men and women with details of their payments. This is an early illustration of library use by women. In 1853 it was agreed that it should be open to all teachers at the school without any payments except fines. A scholars' library was not formed until 1855, suggesting that the library needs of teachers were recognised before those of the scholars, or that the scholars had not progressed beyond reading their class books.<sup>195</sup>

Park Methodist Chapel, Brighouse had separate libraries for teachers and children in 1835, which were united in 1868.<sup>196</sup> Members of the Bible and Testament classes, teachers and members of the congregation were permitted to borrow books.<sup>197</sup> The financing of so many libraries, even if many of the books were relatively cheap works for children, was considerable. Sometimes books were donated. George Buckston Browne (d.1839) of Halifax, a Wesleyan Methodist preacher, was a benefactor of religious institutions. He made donations to Sunday school libraries. According to his obituary in the *Halifax Guardian*:

To Sabbath schools in particular, he ever exhibited a strong regard, and in not a few instances did he become the donor of almost every book forming the School Library...His benevolence was extensive and healthy and obtained for him a prominence among the official characters connected with many religious and philanthropic

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<sup>194</sup> Calderdale District Archives, HM:40, Ebenezer Primitive Methodist Chapel, Halifax, *Committee and Teachers' Meetings Minute Book 1833-47*.

<sup>195</sup> Calderdale District Archives, MISC:375/1/7, 32, 38, Lindwell Primitive Methodist Chapel, Greetland, *Minute Book 1833-47*.

<sup>196</sup> Calderdale District Archives, PA:56, Park Methodist Chapel, Brighouse, *Minute Book 1819-49*.

<sup>197</sup> Calderdale District Archives, PA:59, Park Methodist Chapel, Brighouse, *Sunday School Minute Book 1866-76*.



institutions. The amount of his benefice is unknown, and will never be revealed, but in eternity.<sup>198</sup>

Huddersfield Sunday school libraries benefited from the Rebecca Hussey book charity which gave £5 to the Queen Street Wesleyan Methodist Sunday School in 1870 and a grant of 72 volumes to the Paddock Wesleyan Methodist Sunday School in 1892.<sup>199</sup> Special grants were made from the Huddersfield Sunday School Union for libraries, for example, in 1881 grants of library books were made to four schools.<sup>200</sup> In 1884 library grants totalling £18 were given to two Sunday schools.<sup>201</sup> Library grants amounting to £15 were made to three schools in 1887.<sup>202</sup> Libraries were often self-financing. Subscriptions were charged, suggesting that many children would not have access to them, as they may not have been able to pay the fees. Fines, the sale of library catalogues and old books were additional sources of income. Others received money from within the church or Sunday school, for example, at Park Methodist New Connexion Chapel, Brighouse at the annual teachers' meeting Easter Monday 29 March 1869, it was agreed:

That a Grant of £2 - 0 - 0 given to the library at Brighouse for the purchase of new books.<sup>203</sup>

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<sup>198</sup> The Late G.B. Browne, Esq., *Halifax Guardian*, 7(351), 24 August 1839, 3.

<sup>199</sup> Kirklees District Archives, N/QSMSS/3, Queen Street Huddersfield Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, *Sunday School Minute Book 1867-94*, 217c.

Kirklees District Archives, NM/WM/P2/5, Paddock Wesleyan Chapel, *Sunday School Minute Book 1892-1900*, 28.

<sup>200</sup> Sunday School Unions, Huddersfield, *Sunday School Chronicle*, 10(340), 8 April 1881, 166.

<sup>201</sup> Sunday School Unions, Huddersfield, *Sunday School Chronicle*, 3(495), 28 March 1884, 153.

<sup>202</sup> Huddersfield Sunday School Union, *Huddersfield Chronicle*, 6,135, 2 April 1887, 6.

<sup>203</sup> Calderdale District Archives, PA:59, Park Methodist Chapel, Brighouse, *Sunday School Minute Book 1866-76*.



Sunday school libraries, which seemed successful in terms of volumes and readers, could still have underlying financial problems. This is illustrated by the example of Queen Street Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, Huddersfield. A new building was opened in 1867, and soon after this in 1869, the library was “thoroughly renovated”. At this date the library had 632 volumes and 137 readers and was supported by a quarterly collection in the school. If members of the congregation used the library, they paid 1s per quarter, which could provide extra income. In November 1870 there was only one subscriber of this type, so in practice there was very little extra money. The library in 1873 had grown to 761 volumes with 201 readers and a weekly issue of 110, so was well used, but expenditure had exceeded income. In February 1873 at the annual meeting it was stated in the minutes:

The library derives its support from collections made in the school quarterly which are ordinarily sufficient to meet all demands, but owing to the large amount lately expended there is now a deficiency of about £18.<sup>204</sup>

The library had no funds coming in from any source as the quarterly collections had been discontinued, according to a report presented by Arthur Taylor, the librarian, in January 1876. Furthermore, £7 was still owed to Mr. Woodcock for books, which had been received four years previously. The librarian suggested that the library should be financed from school funds. By June 1876 the debts appear to have been paid off, but the Sunday school general fund was not in a position to provide a grant

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<sup>204</sup> Kirklees District Archives, N/QSMSS/3, Queen Street Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, *Sunday School Minute Book 1867-94*, 301.

for the library, so other means of funding were sought. It was agreed to raise a subscription, yet problems continued as at the annual meeting in February 1877, it was reported:

The Library cannot be considered in the most efficient working order. More books being required, which would probably induce more readers, ways and means, however, are not yet forthcoming.<sup>205</sup>

Sunday school libraries, like all libraries before the advent of public libraries, were dependent on voluntary contributions for their formation and continuance. Although some libraries charged a subscription, given the economic position of the readers, only a small amount of income could be expected from this source. Moreover, teaching was the main function of Sunday schools, so class books had to be acquired first and foremost and only secondly could the library be financed. The presence of so many Sunday school libraries, some with hundreds of volumes, may seem unexpected when compared with day schools, most of which did not have libraries. Donations and encouragement from national and local Sunday school societies, loyalty to individual schools and the copying of good examples would all contribute to the establishment of these Sunday school collections.

Few catalogues remain, but lists of purchases and inventories in minute books are extant. The libraries held tracts, novels, general knowledge books and lives of famous people who had made good.<sup>206</sup> One example of book purchases for a

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<sup>205</sup> Kirklees District Archives, N/QSMSS/3, Queen Street Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, *Sunday School Minute Book 1867-94*, 370, 389.

<sup>206</sup> Philip B. Cliff, *The Rise and Development of the Sunday School Movement in England 1780-1980*, Redhill: National Christian Education Council, 1986, 136-7.



Sunday school library was at Lumbutts United Methodist Chapel, Langfield. In September 1859 the Sunday school committee decided to purchase several books for the library including:

Small Beginnings or the Way to get on...Seed-Time and Harvest, or Sow Well and Reap Well...<sup>207</sup>

Further purchases in October 1859 included:

Sinfulness and Mischief of Worldly Anxiety, Sunbeams for all Seasons...Facts for Everybody...Will the Second Advent by Christ be Pre-Millennial, ...Sermons by the Rev. C.H. Spurgeon.<sup>208</sup>

The list shows a variety of books including some religious works with an emphasis on self help and self-improvement, for example, *Small Beginnings or the Way to Get On* and *Sow Well and Reap Well*. The libraries were not only a source of religious education or guide to standards of conduct, but they also provided works on general education as illustrated by such titles as *Facts for Everybody*. Some of these books, for example, Spurgeon's *Sermons* may have seemed advanced for younger children, but the library was not only open to children, but also to teachers and pewholders. At Sowerby New Road Primitive Methodist Chapel a loans register 1843-57 listed a

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<sup>207</sup> Calderdale District Archives, MISC:654/1, Lumbutts United Methodist Chapel, Langfield, *Sunday School Minute Book 1856-66*.

*Small Beginnings: or, the Way to Get On*, London: J. Hogg, [1859].

W.K. Tweedie, *Seed-time and Harvest; or Sow Well and Reap Well; A Book for the Young*, London: Nelson; W.K. Tweedie, 1852.

<sup>208</sup> Calderdale District Archives, MISC:654/1, Lumbutts United Methodist Chapel, Langfield, *Sunday School Minute Book 1856-66*.

William Beveridge, *The Sinfulness and Mischief of Worldly Anxiety*, Edinburgh: J. Hogg; London: Groombridge, 1858.

*Sunbeams for all Seasons*, London: Houlston and Wright, 1858.

*Facts for Everybody*, London: Ward and Lock, c.1857.

David Brown, *Christ's Second Coming: Will it be Pre-millennial?*, Edinburgh: Johnstone, 1846.



few science books together with *Chambers Miscellany*, but most books were religious or story books for children, such as *The Wide Wide World* and *Aesop's Fables*.<sup>209</sup>

At Blackshaw Head Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, Stansfield among purchases for the Sunday school library in December 1874 were: *Autobiographies of a Lump of Coal, A Grain of Salt; A Drop of Water; A Bit of Old Iron and a Piece of Flint, Take my Advice: a Book for Every Home, Friendly Truths for Working Homes*, and *Good Servants, Good Wives and Happy Homes*.

These examples illustrate the religious and moral aims of Sunday schools. General knowledge books would be useful to scholars who did not attend day school or have access to any other library. The autobiographies of a lump of coal and other natural substances, for example, has the subjects themselves telling their stories to children providing both entertainment and knowledge.<sup>210</sup> Books such as *Friendly Truths for Working Homes* could give advice on how to manage a household, which was particularly important to women and girls. It had headings including “my pence, or what ought I to do?” “my minutes, or how shall I spend them?” and “my duties, or why was I made?” It had a strong moral content giving advice on standards of

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<sup>209</sup> Calderdale District Archives, SB:174, Sowerby New Road Primitive Methodist Chapel, *Sunday School Minute Book 1841-70*.

Wetherell, Elizabeth, *The Wide, Wide World*, London: Nelson, 1852.

<sup>210</sup> Calderdale District Archives, MISC:394/1, Blackshaw Head Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, Stansfield, *Sunday School Minute Book, 1862-75*.

Annie Carey, *Autobiographies of a Lump of Coal; A Grain of Salt; A Drop of Water; A Bit of Old Iron; A Piece of Flint*, London: Cassell, Petter and Galpin, [1870].

conduct and making good use of time and money.<sup>211</sup> *Take My Advice* published nine years later gives advice of a much more practical nature on household management, cookery and gardening as well as a wide range of other topics such as domestic pets, card games and etiquette.<sup>212</sup> Such manuals offered both moral and practical guidance to working class women.

In addition to lists of purchases and inventories in minute books some printed catalogues have survived. The Hope Baptist Sunday School Library of Hebden Bridge had a catalogue dating from 1887, although the library itself had been instituted as early as 1834. It was open to members of the congregation and Sunday school over the age of seven years. Younger children were excluded, but most of the books would be more suitable for adults and older children. There were few for children as such, although there were copies of the *Girls' Own Annual* and the *Boys' Own Annual*. Novels by well-known authors like Dickens and Scott and later novelists such as Mrs. Henry Wood and Mrs. Worboise were included. Natural history, travels and history were represented and, as befits a Sunday school library, many religious works.<sup>213</sup> The Highfield Independent Chapel Huddersfield with its strong literary traditions provides a good example of a Sunday school library catalogue. It was printed in 1865 and is divided into the following classes:

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<sup>211</sup> *Friendly Truths for Working Homes*, London: Knight, 1863.

<sup>212</sup> *Take My Advice: A Book for Every Home*, London: James Blackwood, 1872.

<sup>213</sup> Hope Baptist Church, Hebden Bridge, *Catalogue [1887]*.



Class	Number of Volumes
1. Anecdotes, Stories, etc., for Juniors	297
Anecdotes for Seniors	91
2. Biography	123
3. History	144
4. Christian Missions	37
5. Miscellaneous Works	79
6. Poetry and General Literature	27
7. Religion and Theology	
Part I For Anxious Inquirers	30
Part II For Young Converts and Sunday School Teachers	33
Part III Evidence and Defence of Christianity	39
Part IV Commentaries and Illustrations of the Bible	40
Part V General Religious Works	113
8. Science and Natural History	41
9. [Missing]	
10. Topography and Travels	65
11. Books of Reference	9
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,168<sup>214</sup></b>

The Library was open to teachers and members of the congregation as well as Sunday schools scholars, but there is evidence of books for children with 388 anecdotes and stories for children. The titles of some of the other books even if not religious, suggest guidance on conduct and morality. The anecdotes and story sections include such titles as *Men who were in Earnest, Honesty and Industry* and *Pay your Debts*.<sup>215</sup> By far the largest category was anecdotes and stories for juniors. These stories would provide reading practice as well as imparting moral lessons to

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<sup>214</sup> Highfield Independent Chapel, *Catalogue of the Library of the Highfield Sunday School [1865]*, Huddersfield: G. and J. Brook, 1865.

<sup>215</sup> *Men who were Earnest. The Springs of their Action and Influence. A Series of Biographical Studies*, London, [1860].  
*Basil; or, Honesty and Industry*, London: Religious Tract Society, [1865].  
*Pay your Debts; or, Peter and Mary Vale*, London: Religious Tract Society, [1867].



their readers. Some of the works in the catalogue were publications of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge and the Religious Tract Society, especially the latter. As they were aimed particularly at Sunday school scholars and church and chapel congregations, they sought to explain religion in a clear and understandable way. Examples of Religious Tract Society works in the Highfield catalogue were *Companion to the Bible*, *Parables of the New Testament*, and *Repentance Explained and Enforced*. The Religious Tract Society's publications are also found in other sections of the catalogue, for example, *Bunyan's Life* in the biography section and *History of the Church of Christ* in four volumes in the history section.<sup>216</sup>

Works associated with religion produced by national societies were included in catalogues of Sunday schools throughout England and beyond. Many Sunday school library catalogues were therefore similar. Paddock Sunday School, which was opened in 1846 under the auspices of Highfield, had a library grant from one of the tract societies. The library held 200 volumes and had an issue of 1,440 after the first year providing a firm foundation for its later development.<sup>217</sup> The 1860 catalogue had 562 volumes as follows:

Class	Number of Volumes
Anecdotes and Tales	112
Astronomy	5
Biography	88

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<sup>216</sup> Thomas Timpson, *Companion to the Bible*, London: Religious Tract Society, 1841. *Repentance Explained and Enforced*, London, [1830].  
 Joseph Milner, *The History of the Church of Christ*, Vol. 1, York: G. Peacock, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, Vols. 2-4, 1794-1809.

<sup>217</sup> Kirklees District Archives, Ni/Hi/7a/1, Highfield Independent Chapel, *Sunday School Committee Minute Book 1846-64*.

Botany	5
Commentaries and Illustrations of the Bible	25
Education and Essays	13
History and Antiquities	70
Magazines	18
Miscellaneous	26
Missions	13
Natural History	9
Philosophy, Mental, Moral and Natural	17
Poetry	10
Science and Art	14
Theology and Religion	
Anxious Enquirers and Undecided	19
Evidence of Christianity and Religion	16
Young Converts and Teachers	21
General Religious Works	61
Topography	6
Voyages and Travels	14
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>562<sup>218</sup></b>

This library was similar in format to Highfield. Religious works and anecdotes and tales made up large classes and included many Religious Tract Society publications. Their titles clearly relate to standards of conduct and self-improvement with good behaviour being rewarded in story books and examples of lives to emulate in biographies. As the library received a grant from this society, much of its content would be identical to Sunday school libraries elsewhere, which had received similar grants.

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<sup>218</sup> Paddock Congregational Sunday School, *Catalogue of the Paddock Congregational School Library [1860]*, Huddersfield: G. and J. Brook, 1860.

Sunday school libraries held books not only for teachers and adults, but also books specifically written for children. They were therefore not merely collections divided into different subjects, but were actively used. The Highfield Library, which had about 500 books in 1846, had an annual issue of 2,688.<sup>219</sup> By 1879 the number of volumes had risen to 1,236 and the annual issue was 3,667: averaging more than 70 per week. By this time too the Paddock Sunday School had 920 volumes, an annual issue of 2,699: an average of over 50 per week.<sup>220</sup> Much of the literature was aimed at Sunday school scholars and the libraries held story books as well as religious and educational books, which explain the high issue.

Sunday school libraries were well used as issue figures show, but there is usually no indication of the number of times books on particular subjects or individual titles were borrowed. Even with a high number of issues, some books and subjects may have been infrequently loaned or even not borrowed at all. However, a few issue registers remain, for example, for the teacher's library at Lindwell Primitive Methodist Chapel, Greetland. An inventory of 52 books is listed in the minute book together with a loans register 1840-52. The register lists the number of books on loan alongside the name of the subscriber. It is possible to obtain a rough estimate from the register of the number of times each book has been borrowed and the inventory is given in full:

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<sup>219</sup> Kirklees District Archives, Ni/Hi/7a/1, Highfield Independent Chapel, *Sunday School Committee Book 1846-64*.

<sup>220</sup> Robert Bruce, *Huddersfield Sunday School Centenary Memorial. A Brief Account of the Origin and Early History of Sunday Schools in the Borough of Huddersfield*, Huddersfield: J. Crossley, 1880, 38.



Title	Number of Issues
1. A Present for the Young	7
2. Rites and Worship of the Jews	19
3. Bible Geography	7
4. Anecdotes Sunday Schools	13
5. Youth's Instructor	15
6. Cobbin's Evangelical Biography	2
7. Village in an Uproar	26
8. The Patriarchs	20
9. Todd's Truth Made Simple	6
10. The Life of the Rev. George Whitefield	19
11. The Way for a Child to be Saved	31
12. The Life of John Newton	12
13. Todd's Lectures	11
14. Abbott's Fire-side [Piety]	5
15. Hints on Conversation	11
16. Watt's Scripture History	12
17. The Family Book	21
18. The Holy War	25
19. Bunyan's Life	17
20. Bunyan's Choice Works	24
21. True Happiness	25
22. Memoir of Ann Wrangham	8
23. Pike's Motives	3
24. Force of Truth	14
25. Broome's Selection	2
26. Beauties of Theology	21
27. Hive	14
28. Campbell's Voyages	15
29. History of the Reformation [in] Scotland	12
30. Memoir of Miss M.A. Burton	19
31. Newton Life of Grimshaw	5
32. Life of Fanny Woodbury	3
33. Simpson's Key to the Prophecies	18
34. Journeys of the Children of Israel	24
35. Wesley Life of Fletcher	6
36. Britons and Saxons	24
37. Judges of Israel	30
38. Aesop's Fables	21
39. Thornton on Early Piety	8
40. Anecdotes Social Life	28

41.	Life of Gustavas Vassa	20
42.	Cabinet of Nature	31
43.	Monthly Teacher	32
44.	Manners and Customs of the Jews	10
45.	Monthly Teacher	23
46.	Monthly Teacher	20
47.	Monthly Teacher	6
48.	Monthly Teacher	3
49.	Scripture Teacher's Assistant	7
50.	[Blank]	11
51.	[Blank]	4
52.	Hints on Conversation	1
TOTAL		771 <sup>221</sup>

Most of the books were religious and there were several scripture magazines: *Monthly Teacher*, *Scripture Teacher's Assistant* and *Hive* (possibly the *Juvenile Companion and Sunday School Hive*). Clearly these magazines were not merely a source of Biblical knowledge or religious history, but were related directly to the work of the Sunday school. They were magazines specifically aimed at teaching. Religious history and biography were also strong. Some of the books listed in the inventory would be useful for teaching such as John Todd's *Truth Made Simple: being a System of Theology for Children*.<sup>222</sup> The absence of story books which were often predominant in children's libraries, underlines the importance of the educational function of the library. The teachers were older children or adults who

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<sup>221</sup> Calderdale District Archives, MISC:375/1/3-4, 9-17, Lindwell Primitive Methodist Chapel, Greetland, *Minute Book 1840-70*.

<sup>222</sup> John Todd, *Truth Made Simple: being a System of Theology for Children*: London: Arnold and Ball, 1839.

would be concerned with extending their own knowledge and in the preparation of lessons.

The issue from the library was at least 749. This is not high as it covered a period of 12 years, so the annual issue averaged at least 62 per year. The teachers would pass on some of the lessons and knowledge from the books to their scholars, so even though the issue was low, the library may have had more impact than these figures suggest. The relatively high issue for *The Way for a Child to be Saved* suggested that the teachers were conscientious in their duties.<sup>223</sup> The Lindwell Primitive Methodist Chapel is a good example of teachers' library and loan register in the mid-nineteenth century.

A later example of a Sunday school library where information on book issues has survived is the Scout Road Wesleyan Methodist Chapel Sunday School Library, Mytholmroyd. Loan registers for 1872-94 list borrowers and the book number of their loans, but as there are no extant catalogues the books borrowed cannot be identified.<sup>224</sup> A library register was kept covering nearly every month between December 1876 and 1896, which listed weekly loans divided by subject.

Details of library issues are also given in annual reports. There were 61 readers, 60 of whom were "connected with the school" and one subscriber, according to the 1877 annual report. The library at this time held about 512 volumes and had an annual issue of 1,090. The issue was divided as follows:

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<sup>223</sup> Jacob Abbott, *The Way for a Child to be Saved*, London: Houlston, c.1835.

<sup>224</sup> Calderdale District Archives, MY: 94-9 Scout Road Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, Mytholmroyd, *Sunday School Library Registers 1872-94*.



Elementary	350
Poetry	35
Science	68
Miscellaneous	314
Tales	116
History	20
Travels	82
Biography	83
Theology	22
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,090 <sup>225</sup></b>

A similar pattern is revealed in the loan register where for 1878 the issues were:

Elementary	506
Poetry	23
Sciences	82
Miscellaneous	289
Tales	170
History	38
Travels	16
Biography	97
Theology	44
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,265 <sup>226</sup></b>

Borrowers were mainly connected with the school and clearly children were using the library because elementary books and tales had high issues. The issue of such a large number of elementary books implies that even in the 1870s Sunday schools played an important part in basic education. Sunday school libraries were numerous in the Halifax and Huddersfield areas.

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<sup>225</sup> Calderdale District Archives, MY:2, Scout Road Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, Mytholmroyd, *Teachers' and Committee Meetings Minute Book 1871-8*.

<sup>226</sup> Calderdale District Archives, MY:102, Scout Road Wesleyan Methodist Chapel Sunday School *Library Book 1876-96*.

To summarise on Sunday schools: Churches and chapels of several denominations were scattered throughout this area. Most had Sunday schools, which were particularly prevalent in the West Riding of Yorkshire. According to the 1833 *Education Enquiry*, there were only a few Sunday school libraries, but encouraged by national and local organisations, their numbers increased. In 1879 the Huddersfield Sunday School Union statistics show that most nonconformist chapels had Sunday school libraries. These statistics, together with records of individual churches and chapels provide evidence not only for the existence of libraries, but also their high level of issues. Moreover, the libraries were significant in that they were a source of religious literature at a time when most other types of library, for example, mechanics' institute libraries, had little material of this type. Not only Sunday school scholars, but teachers borrowed books or even had their own libraries and some libraries were open to members of the congregation. Women could benefit, as they were less likely to be members of other libraries. Sunday school libraries were an indispensable source of literature for both male and female teachers for preparation of lessons. This is amply illustrated by the teachers' library at the Lindwell Primitive Methodist Sunday School, Greetland.

A variety of publications were used in Sunday schools including hymn books, reading books and magazines. Younger children may not have progressed beyond their class books. However, some young children would have used the libraries, for example, the Highfield and Paddock Sunday schools libraries, which held numerous books on anecdotes and tales, and Highfield, had a section specifically for juniors.

At Scout Road, Mytholmroyd elementary books and tales had a high loan rate, which suggests that they were useful for reading practice or simply reading for entertainment. Sunday schools therefore educated many working class children and their libraries were an important, if often overlooked, source of religious and general education.

## **6.6 CONCLUSION**

In the second half of the nineteenth century the work of churches and chapels was important, not only in the religious and spiritual life of the population, but also in their social life and education. Church and chapel libraries ranged from older parish libraries, like that of Halifax parish with religious works and classics to Sunday school libraries with cheap books on religion and moralistic tales for children. Not only had the type of literature in church libraries changed, but so had the readers. Early church libraries would only have been used by a small number of men with sufficient means to acquire some education and in Slaithwaite the library was for the use of the minister only. In sharp contrast, Sunday school libraries were used by working class children, both boys and girls. Moreover, by the mid-nineteenth century many parish libraries including Halifax had fallen into disuse, whereas Sunday school libraries were thriving. Every Anglican Church did not have a parochial library, but most churches and chapels of all denominations had Sunday schools, which had libraries by the late nineteenth century.

The number of people who were able to read had increased and was not limited to a few men of the middle class. Education had extended to all classes and



to women as well as men, and to children. Many secular libraries were in existence by this time, but some people, particularly women, and those in more rural areas would not look beyond their church or chapel for literature

Halifax Parish Church had one of the earliest church libraries in the West Riding of Yorkshire, but by the mid-nineteenth century it had fallen into disuse and some of the books were in poor condition. Neglect and indifference were common to many parish libraries at this time as revealed in the Select Committee on Public Libraries *Report* of 1849, so Halifax was simply part of a national trend. Both local and national recognition of the need to preserve these libraries led to improvements, and restoration in Halifax was typical of developments elsewhere. It was not merely a matter of taking care of older books, but also of adding newer ones. The library was extended by the Priestley bequest in 1860. Halifax was unusual in having an older library. Huddersfield, like Bradford and Leeds had a more recent Bray library. It was not necessarily the larger towns, which had church libraries, as Slaithwaite also had a library dating from the early eighteenth century. It was enlarged by the bequest of Hannah Mellor in 1843, like the library at Halifax, which received the Priestley bequest in 1860.

The Halifax Church Institute was formed in 1857 and the Huddersfield Church Institute was formed in 1860. Church institutes which were connected with the Anglican church, were common at this time. Bradford, Leeds and Wakefield also had them. One of their aims was 'the promotion of general knowledge in subordination to religion'. This was in sharp contrast to the similar mechanics'

institutes, which had a 'no politics, no religion' rule. The contents of the libraries had a strong religious and moral element, but a wide variety of literature was held. Huddersfield supplemented its stock with books from commercial circulating libraries.

All denominations of churches and chapels had congregational libraries, but they were by no means universal. The Society of Friends was well supplied with libraries, but they were complying with yearly and quarterly meeting directives and were therefore part of a national network of libraries. Congregational, Independent and Unitarian chapels were also relatively strong in libraries possibly emulating good examples elsewhere, such as at Newcastle and Leeds. Without central direction, literary tradition or good example many other churches and chapels had only a library shared with the Sunday school. Service books for use in religious worship such as hymn books and Bibles were another form of literature associated with churches and chapels. Magazines and tracts were distributed, often of a denominational nature.

Sunday school libraries were widespread by the late nineteenth century encouraged by both grants and money from national and local unions. Sunday schools flourished in the West Riding of Yorkshire and Halifax had one of the largest Sunday school unions in England. Use of Sunday school libraries was not limited to children. Members of the congregation were often able to borrow from these libraries and teachers used them for lesson preparation. Often there were separate libraries for teachers and children. Older children in particular, made use of



Sunday school libraries and statistics show that the issue rate was high. They were a vital library source for working class children who may not have had the means to purchase books nor access to other libraries as few day schools had libraries. High issue rates often in contrast with other church and chapel libraries underline the importance of the church in the provision of education. The libraries were not only a means of religious instruction, but also of elementary education.

Secular libraries, often with 'no politics, no religion' rules held few theological books and, as may be expected, church and chapel libraries had a high proportion of religious literature, but most were not exclusively religious and had books on other subjects. Many of these books, however, had religious associations. Even the Society of Friends' libraries held biographies, although they were of Quaker 'lives'. The library of the Halifax Church Institute illustrates how other subjects may be connected with religion: some history books were related to the history of the church, biographies were of religious figures and even travel books were often associated with Christian missions. Sunday school libraries in particular held story books, often from the Religious Tract Society and similar organisations, which emphasised self-help and gave guidance on standards of conduct. Where books were not strictly religious, they had some connection with religion or had a moral message.

Churches not only regarded themselves as responsible for the welfare of their members, but they also felt a responsibility to the community in general. Ministers, for example, the Anglican Reverend Charles A. Hulbert in Slaithwaite and the



Unitarian Reverend William Turner of Halifax served on the committees of secular organisations. In some instances church and chapel libraries were open to those who did not attend church. Parish libraries such as Halifax were intended for all those who lived in the parish. The libraries of the Society of Friends lent books to non-attenders. In rural areas like Blackshaw Head the library of the Wesleyan Methodist Chapel was open to all in the neighbourhood. Tracts and religious publications were distributed locally. This was a practice common to many denominations, for example, at St. James Church, Slaithwaite Bibles and Prayer Books were circulated in the locality and both Hanover Street Methodist New Connexion Chapel and Todmorden Unitarian Church distributed tracts. Much of this literature was denominational and as well as concern for spiritual welfare, it could also be used to aid denominational recruitment. Church and chapel libraries, especially Sunday school libraries, were a source of religious and general literature, some of which was not found in other libraries and were important particularly to women and children who were not members of secular libraries. They were important, not only for religious instruction, but also for general education.

## EPILOGUE

### THE COMING OF THE PUBLIC LIBRARIES

#### E.1 Introduction

Halifax, Huddersfield, and many other towns throughout Great Britain had a variety of libraries by the mid-nineteenth century. Some were provided by secular associations: middle class subscription libraries, literary and philosophical society libraries and libraries attached to educational institutions, both schools and mechanics' institutes. Commercial circulating libraries, newsrooms and bookselling thrived. Churches, chapels and religious organisations had libraries providing religious and other kinds of literature. Nevertheless, use of most libraries was dependent on membership of societies or religious affiliation. Moreover, most required payment of a subscription. Many people would be unable to afford to join societies or buy books: they may have had large families or be low paid or unemployed. Women, in particular, often had few economic means.

Libraries varied from general collections to those covering a specific subject or having a particular emphasis. Some people had access to several libraries through membership of organisations and owned many books, whereas others did not use libraries at all and possessed few books. It was against this background that public libraries were introduced. Many libraries before 1850 described themselves as 'public' because they were accessible to the public, although often with payment, municipal public libraries were sometimes known as free public libraries.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Alistair Black, *A New History of Public Libraries. Social and Intellectual Contexts, 1850-1914*, 27.

Thomas Kelly's book entitled *Early Public Libraries. A History of Public Libraries in Great Britain before 1850* covers all types of institutional library. However, despite the title, Kelly recognised that most pre-1850 libraries were not strictly speaking 'public' libraries.<sup>2</sup> Of course there were many examples of libraries connected to the church, such as Halifax Parish Church Library, which allowed access and books to all those living in a particular area. Some early endowed libraries such as Chetham's Library in Manchester, founded in 1653, were also freely available to the public.<sup>3</sup>

Advocacy of public libraries was not new in the mid-nineteenth century. In 1833, for example, Joshua Hobson was probably the author of an article in the *Voice of the West Riding*, which had proposed the establishment of library for the working classes in every city and large town and George Searle Phillips was also an advocate of public libraries.<sup>4</sup> Interest in public libraries led to the setting up of a Select Committee on Public Libraries. It reported in 1849 that existing public libraries in England were totally inadequate and did not compare well with those in some other countries, such as France, Belgium, the Prussian States, Austria and Bavaria.<sup>5</sup> The report led to the Public Libraries Act of 1850, which empowered municipal authorities with a population of 10,000 or more to levy a ½ d rate on the provision of accommodation for a library. A special poll of ratepayers with a majority of two thirds of the votes cast was necessary for the adoption of the Act.

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<sup>2</sup> Thomas Kelly, *Early Public Libraries*, 241.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 77, 241.

<sup>4</sup> See above 5.1.3.

<sup>5</sup> House of Commons, Select Committee on Public Libraries, *Report*, 1849, iv.



The legislation was permissive: it did not make public libraries compulsory, but it enabled local authorities to adopt the Public Libraries Act. Consequently, public libraries developed in a piecemeal manner dependent on local circumstances. Three pioneering public libraries had been founded under the Museums Act of 1845: Canterbury in 1847, Warrington in 1848 and Salford in 1850. Liverpool and Manchester had libraries from 1852. Of the 125 libraries established by 1886 in England, Wales and Scotland, 98 were formed during the years 1868 to 1886. The extension of education meant that a greater number of people were able to make use of public libraries. As legislation for public libraries was permissive, their introduction depended on local circumstances, unlike the provision of elementary education, which was compulsory after 1870. The need for local government to become involved in the provision of education drew attention to the need for public libraries, which could supplement education.

In 1886 geographical distribution of libraries was uneven. Lancashire had 18 and the West Riding of Yorkshire had seven. There were 17 in Staffordshire and seven in Cheshire, which were mainly situated in industrial towns. The agricultural areas were under-represented and eight counties, including Lincolnshire and Westmorland, had no public libraries at all. Like mechanics' institutes and co-operative societies, public libraries were well represented in the industrial areas of the north being associated with the education and self-improvement of the industrial working class. In the West Riding of Yorkshire the first town to adopt the Public Libraries Act was Sheffield in 1853, 15 years before Doncaster and Leeds in 1868. Bradford followed in 1871 and Rotherham in 1876. Halifax adopted the Public

Libraries Act in 1881, but Huddersfield differed in that although a local act of 1871 allowed the establishment of a public library, the decision to have a library was not taken until 26 years later, in 1897.<sup>6</sup>

## E.2 Halifax Public Library

Halifax had a public library from 1882, although Sheffield was the first to be established in the West Riding of Yorkshire. An editorial in favour of public libraries had appeared in the *Halifax Courier* as early as September 1865:

In these days we have come to regard as indispensable much that our grandfathers hardly cared about. Cemeteries...baths and washhouses [sic], efficient sanitary regulations of different kinds, parks and recreation grounds - with these and other provisions for the general physical well-being we have now grown familiar. Assuredly the means whereby the intellectual culture of the people may be furthered are not less important, and the State has recognised this principle by annually devoting nearly a million sterling to the promotion of education.<sup>7</sup>

Clearly, material improvements in the field of public health had progressed, but the importance of providing for mental improvement was also recognised with reference to the state provision of education. The editorial was advocating public libraries, which were associated with education under the broad heading 'intellectual culture.'

The Halifax Trades Union passed a resolution at a meeting in November 1866 to petition the council for:

a free public reading and lending library in Halifax, for affording facilities to the working classes to peruse the higher class of literature, otherwise beyond their reach...<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Thomas Kelly, *A History of Public Libraries in Great Britain 1845-1975*, 23-5, 484-5.

<sup>7</sup> Free Libraries [Editorial], *Halifax Courier*, 13(662), 9 September 1865, 4.

<sup>8</sup> Local News. Halifax, Proposed Free Library for Halifax, *Halifax Guardian*, 34(1,763), 10 November 1866, 4.



Working men were requesting a public library. It was not the suggestion of a paternalistic middle class: they were asking for it themselves. Public libraries were seen as a source of education and self-improvement, which is evident from the reference to 'a higher class of literature.'

However, despite the obvious interest expressed at this time, it was over 14 years before the Public Libraries Act was adopted. This kind of delay was quite common. Proposals for public libraries were often defeated on grounds of cost, as ratepayers were reluctant to pay for them. In Leeds, for example, in 1861 a memorial signed by 608 persons was presented to the Town Council pointing out the need for a public library. The resolution was defeated. The idea was that the working classes already had the opportunity for knowledge and they should learn to rely on themselves because of all the other libraries in Leeds at that time including the library of the Leeds Mechanics' Institution with 27,343 volumes and an annual issue of 97,450 volumes in 1860.<sup>9</sup> The Act was adopted in Halifax in March 1891, shortly after a letter had appeared in both the *Halifax Courier* and the *Halifax Guardian* 19 March 1881 from Councillor J.W. Davis. The letter was detailed and gave numerous arguments in favour of public libraries, for example:

1. Reading good substantial literature, is rendered of easy access to all classes of the community, with especial advantage to the very poor people.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Thomas W. Hand, *A Brief Account of the Public Libraries of the City of Leeds 1870-1920*, Leeds: Jowett and Sowry, 1920, 2-3.

<sup>10</sup> J. W. Davis, A Free Library for Halifax [Letter], *Halifax Courier*, 29(1,474), 19 March 1881, 7; A Free Library Act [Letter], *Halifax Guardian*, 49(2,520), 19 March 1881, 7.



Like the Halifax Trades Union in 1866, Councillor Davis emphasised the need for high quality or good literature, arguing that this was particularly important to very poor people who were unable to buy their own books or pay subscriptions to other libraries. He also stressed the educational value of public libraries, noting, for example, that after children had left school they could continue their reading and studies in libraries. Furthermore, he claimed that knowledge could not only aid self-development, but could also be useful, so that a 'working contractor' or 'intelligent artisan' could read modern works relevant to his employment and thereby improve his work practices. As well as having educational value, Councillor Davis claimed that public libraries could raise standards of behaviour and morality. Working men might spend their evenings in "comfortable reading rooms" instead of frequenting the dramshop or public house. Moreover, he argued that public libraries were larger than other libraries and offered greater variety of reading matter:

To all classes of society the public library affords facilities for the study of the best literature because eventually a rate-supported library can always afford to purchase a larger number and greater variety of books than privately conducted institutions.<sup>11</sup>

By this time both Leeds and Bradford had public libraries. The letter referred to the popularity of the Leeds Public Library, despite the existence of other libraries, which also continued to thrive. Bradford Public Library was also well used.<sup>12</sup> These examples demonstrated the proven worth and success of public libraries.

A public meeting of ratepayers was held 23 March 1881 to decide whether or not to adopt the Public Libraries Act. Suggestions that it would not be fair to adopt

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<sup>11</sup> J.W. Davis, A Free Library for Halifax [Letter], 7.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, 7.

the Act with only one-sixteenth of the ratepayers present and that the meeting be adjourned for a month were not accepted: most of those present voted in favour and the Act was adopted.<sup>13</sup>

### **E.3 Huddersfield Public Library**

Huddersfield did not have a public library until 1898 despite a local government act of 1871 giving exemption from a rate limit. A partial explanation may be sought in the relatively late development of Huddersfield, which was largely a product of the Industrial Revolution. A market hall was built in 1880. In 1883 Huddersfield became the first municipal authority to operate its own tramway system. It was also one of the first municipalities to implement the Artisans' Dwellings Act in 1875, which enabled local authorities to clear slums and rehouse the occupants.<sup>14</sup> The incorporated borough therefore undertook a series of public works and was even a pioneer in some areas, including the provision of trams and municipal housing, so despite its relatively late incorporation for a sizeable industrial town, Huddersfield had proved that it could be innovative. However, there was some delay in and much opposition to the establishment of a public library.

In October 1880 a meeting to discuss a free library was held in Huddersfield attended by 70-80 people. They had a discussion on public libraries and a resolution was passed:

That in the opinion of this meeting it is very desirable that a Free Library should be established in Huddersfield.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> The Public Libraries Acts. Public Meeting of Ratepayers at Halifax, *Halifax Guardian*, 49(2,521), 26 March 1881, 7.

<sup>14</sup> Roy Brook, *The Story of Huddersfield*, 178-85.

<sup>15</sup> Kirklees District Archives, S/HFL, Huddersfield Free Libraries Committee, *Minutes 1880-7*, 3.



Among those attending this meeting were many influential men who were prominent in local politics, in the cultural and educational life of the town and ministers of religion. They included the mayor, several councillors, the Reverend W.B. Calvert, Vicar of Huddersfield, 1866-84, the Reverend Father Stephen Wells, Priest of St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Church, Huddersfield 1859-83, the Reverend Robert Bruce, Unitarian Minister at Highfield Chapel 1854-1904, the Reverend John Stock, Minister of Salendine Nook Baptist Church 1848-57, 1872-84; Thomas Brooke, Conservative and antiquarian and Owen Balmforth, a Liberal involved in the co-operative movement.<sup>16</sup> Some of the most prominent men in Huddersfield were in favour of a public library and support came from both Conservatives and Liberals and from ministers of religion of different denominations. A meeting of ratepayers was held in December 1880 and Councillor (later Alderman) Charles Glendinning spoke of the necessity of a free library:

...that the working man and all classes might become intelligent enough to compete with other nations in manufactures; in order that the school education might be supplemented; in order that the 3,000 children who were yearly leaving the schools might get good literature; in order that the poorer classes, who would have to solve most important social and political problems in the future might have wisdom...<sup>17</sup>

Free public libraries were arguably of educational importance both for children at school and for those who had left school, to assist the solution of social problems and to make England economically competitive. Despite the arguments put forward

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<sup>16</sup> Kirklees District Archives, S/HFL, Huddersfield Free Libraries Committee, *Minutes 1880-7*, 1. Francis X. Singleton, *A Historical Record of St. Patrick's Church Huddersfield 1832 Centenary 1932*, Huddersfield: Swindlehurst and Nicholson, 1932, 22-3. Percy Stocks, *Foundations [of Salendine Nook Baptist Church]*, 421.

<sup>17</sup> The Public Library Question. Meeting of the Ratepayers, *Huddersfield Chronicle*, 4,178, 24 December 1880, 8.



in favour of a public library and its influential supporters from varied political and religious backgrounds, the ratepayers had to approve the proposal. Concerns were expressed about the expense considering “ the immense sums expended in public improvements during the last twelve years”.<sup>18</sup> The resolution was passed, but it was agreed to have a poll of ratepayers which took place the following month. The poll, however, was against the establishment of a public library in Huddersfield: 1,256 voted in favour, but 2,483 voted against. Only 3,739 voted from an electorate of 15,000.<sup>19</sup> The proposal was thus rejected despite the support of influential people and ratepayers who had attended the meeting.

The Free Libraries Committee reconvened in 1884 to make another attempt at establishing a public library. Correspondence largely in favour appeared in the *Huddersfield Chronicle* and *Huddersfield Examiner* in August and September 1884.

Owen Balmforth advanced similar arguments to those already made:

Many working-men, for want of other attractions, spend their time at the public-house, when if we had a free library they might probably turn their attention in that direction instead.<sup>20</sup>

A letter in the *Huddersfield Chronicle* claimed that public libraries:

tend powerfully to refine the taste, reform bad habits, and elevate the morals of the people; if so, it will be a public blessing to have such a library, for crime and pauperism will thereby be diminished, and as a consequence our taxes will be lighter.<sup>21</sup>

So libraries were identified as civilising forces: they were not only sources of knowledge and a means of self-education, but would also reduce crime,

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<sup>18</sup> The Public Library Question. Meeting of the Ratepayers, 8.

<sup>19</sup> Roy Brook, *The Story of Huddersfield*, 186-7.

<sup>20</sup> Owen Balmforth, Free Library for Huddersfield [Letter], *Huddersfield Examiner*, 31(5,808), 16 August 1884, 6.

<sup>21</sup> 'D', A Free Library for Huddersfield [Letter], *Huddersfield Chronicle*, 5,316, 16 August 1884, 8.

consumption of alcohol and, in general, improve morals and behaviour. Not all letters were in favour, however, for objections were made on financial grounds. One correspondent who although in favour of a public library, thought it should be financed by voluntary contributions and saw it as a luxury rather than a necessity:

The tendency of the age is to heap up public debts too fast, and extend the functions of capital to the disadvantages of the working classes.<sup>22</sup>

In contrast, another correspondent compared Huddersfield unfavourably with some other towns:

Allow me to mention that the Libraries' Act has been put into operation at Halifax, Bradford, and Leeds, Rochdale, Oldham, and Stockport, and if Huddersfield does not now decide in favour of a free library I shall consider that hope has sunk beneath the horizon.<sup>23</sup>

Joseph Crosland, a wealthy manufacturer, later Conservative Member of Parliament for Huddersfield 1892-5, offered £5,000 towards the cost of a public library and a deputation was sent to the General Purposes Committee of the Council in September 1884. The Reverend James W. Bardsley, Vicar of Huddersfield 1884-1901, had only been resident in the town for six months:

When he came here one of the first questions he asked was whether there was a free public library in the town, and he was very much astonished to hear that such was not the case...He spoke under correction when he said that Huddersfield was in the unenviable position of being the only one of our large provincial towns without a free library.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> 'Biblio', Free Library for Huddersfield [Letter], *Huddersfield Chronicle*, 5,334, 6 September 1884, 6.

<sup>23</sup> 'J.H.', A Free Library for Huddersfield [Letter], *Huddersfield Chronicle*, 5,328, 30 August 1884, 7.

<sup>24</sup> The Free Library Question in Huddersfield, *Huddersfield Daily Chronicle*, 5,343, 17 September 1884, 3.



The deputation had wanted a library to be established under the special local government act of 1871, but the Council decided to have a poll of ratepayers, on which Joseph Crosland withdrew his offer.<sup>25</sup> Another attempt was made to establish a public library in March 1887 to mark Queen Victoria's golden jubilee. A meeting of ratepayers was called and a poll was demanded.<sup>26</sup> The result was similar to that of 1881 with 1,082 for and 2,885 against out of an electorate of 17,304. The proposition was therefore rejected for a second time. It was not in fact until 10 years later that a meeting of ratepayers agreed to establish a public library as part of the celebrations for Queen Victoria's diamond jubilee.<sup>27</sup>

#### **E.4 Halifax and Huddersfield: Some Comparisons**

Halifax adopted the Public Libraries Act in 1881 whereas Huddersfield did not agree to have a public library until 1897. Two smaller towns in the Halifax area had libraries before Huddersfield: Sowerby Bridge District and Todmorden adopted the Public Libraries Act in 1893 and 1896 respectively. Brighouse adopted the Act in 1898, only a year before Huddersfield agreed to have a library. Huddersfield therefore for a relatively large industrial town, was comparatively late in opening a public library and by the time it did smaller towns in the area had begun to open them. Working men first petitioned the council for a public library in Halifax in 1866, which was two years before Huddersfield was incorporated. In contrast, a meeting held in Huddersfield in October 1880, which agreed to petition the council

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<sup>25</sup> Huddersfield Town Council, *Huddersfield Daily Chronicle*, 5,499, 19 March 1885, 3.

<sup>26</sup> Public Meeting on the Free Libraries Act, *Huddersfield Chronicle*, 6,123, 19 March 1887, 7.

<sup>27</sup> Public Meeting in the Town Hall. The Free Library and Nurses' Institute Carried Jointly, *Huddersfield Chronicle*, 9,266, 10 April 1897, 8.



for a public library was attended by many of the leading citizens of Huddersfield: councillors, ministers of religion and others. However, both held meetings of ratepayers at around the same time: Huddersfield in December 1880 and Halifax in March 1881 and most of the ratepayers at the meeting voted in favour. In Huddersfield a poll of ratepayers was also held and after the vote rejected a free public library, it was a further 16 years before agreement was reached to open a library. Halifax, perhaps with the knowledge of what had taken place at neighbouring Huddersfield, adopted the Act on the basis of the ratepayers' vote at the meeting and did not have a separate poll of all ratepayers thus avoiding the protracted campaign and delay experienced in Huddersfield. Influential people in Halifax and Huddersfield and most ratepayers who attended meetings were in favour, but in Huddersfield two polls of ratepayers resulted in the rejection of adopting a public library. The franchise had been widened, but although more men were able to vote, they also paid taxes. Many were in favour of public libraries, but were concerned about the cost. Paradoxically the extension of democracy could impede the development of public libraries intended for everyone.

## CONCLUSION

To some people the word library appears to be synonymous with public library as the only library they know is their local public library; many others, particularly younger people benefiting from the expansion of higher education, are familiar with university and college libraries. With recent advances in education and library provision, it might well be a logical assumption to make that little has gone before or at least prior to an age of mass education and almost universal literacy any provision would have been piecemeal touching the lives of the few rather than the many. Most libraries from the nineteenth century and earlier have not survived; this merely serves to confirm this assumption and contrasts the plenty of the present with the paucity of the past.

On closer inspection we find that some early libraries still exist, but they may exist with different aims: what may once have been working collections may now be unused 'treasures'. Many books may have been lost and those which remain, may be too few in number to justify them being described as a library. Libraries may also have changed location or have been absorbed into other collections; for example, the Anglican Halifax and Slaithwaite libraries are now part of the special collections of the library of York University. It is obvious that the picture has completely changed and it may not be so much a matter of trying to discover what has survived as attempting to assess what had been lost.

However, it is still possible to piece together the pattern of early libraries, as even if many of those libraries are no longer extant, many of their records have remained in the form, for example, of minute books and library catalogues. These

can be supplemented by newspaper reports as well as more accessible secondary books and articles on the history of books and libraries and related subjects, at both local and national levels. They necessarily give an incomplete picture, but rather than pointing to a dearth of early libraries and confirming any earlier assumptions, they rather suggest that the opposite may well be true.

As I stated in the introduction, I had already looked at secondary material and primary records on the history of Halifax libraries in relation to my earlier research on the history of the library of the Halifax Mechanics' Institution. So before I began this study I was aware that much previous work had been carried out on the history of libraries in all parts of the country as well as local historical research and there was sufficient material for a history of libraries, even if limited to a small geographical area. However, it was still unclear at that stage whether or not there was enough for a lengthy dissertation, so I extended my area of study to include not only Halifax and Halifax parish, but also the neighbouring town of Huddersfield and the surrounding areas. I have also covered a considerable period of time for this thesis spans three centuries. So much evidence was discovered that I could only take the story up to the introduction of the public libraries. With such a large amount of material some selectivity both in the number of libraries covered and the amount of coverage was inevitable.

I have built on previous work as my bibliography suggests, but I have also made use of quotations, particularly from local newspapers, that have not been previously cited. My extensive examination of newspapers has confirmed my early assumption that they are much underestimated as a historical source.



I have also done research on libraries on which little or nothing has been written. The Society of Friends' libraries in the area has not been covered before in detail, despite the relatively high volume of research being carried out in Quaker history. In addition, some of the more specialised Huddersfield libraries: those of the Huddersfield Philosophical Society, the Huddersfield Literary and Scientific Society, the Huddersfield Medical Society Library and the Huddersfield Foreign Society Library have received little attention elsewhere. I have included Anglican church institute libraries which are also, I would suggest, a neglected subject. Louie Carr in her M.L.S. thesis describes a few Sunday school libraries in Huddersfield, but most Sunday school libraries have never been properly researched. This remains a fruitful field for further study.

Before the formation of the Halifax Circulating Library in 1768 there were few libraries in the Halifax and Huddersfield area. Some of the most important were church libraries. Halifax Parish Church Library was formed around 1624 and the Slaithwaite Church Library a century later in 1724. There was the library of Oliver Heywood, which was strictly speaking a private library; in addition, at least two libraries of the Society of Friends, a few school libraries and by the mid-eighteenth century book clubs were being formed. To simply list these libraries provides clear evidence of cultural and literary activity in the area in the seventeenth and the early eighteenth centuries. Yet they were small libraries. Halifax Parish Church Library at the time of the Brearcliffe Manuscript around 1659 had only 43 volumes.<sup>1</sup> The Slaithwaite Church Library had 133 volumes in 1724 and the Brighouse Preparative

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<sup>1</sup> See above 2.2.2

Meeting had as many as 139 works in 1712. Oliver Heywood had 257 books in 1664 and he lent books to his followers.<sup>2</sup>

So the number of books in these libraries may be in their hundreds, but had not reached their thousands. It was the age of small libraries used by a small number of people. They were not accessible to most people either through location, religious affiliation, but above all lack of literacy. There were, of course, alternatives to libraries such as the purchase of books and the building up of private collections, but similarly lack of education meant that few people would have significant involvement in book purchase.

The position was to change with industrialisation. From the mid-eighteenth century the Industrial Revolution had far-reaching effects on the economy and on the distribution of an increasing population. Everything was on a far larger scale than hitherto: factories often of a considerable size based in towns where greatly increased numbers of people were concentrated. There was the rise of a middle class. Subscription libraries were formed, notably in the area of this study. The Halifax Circulating Library was founded in 1768 and the Huddersfield Subscription Library in 1807 with more specialised literary, scientific and philosophical libraries from the 1830s. But cultural and literary provision extended to all classes with the libraries of mechanics' institutes, Sunday schools and co-operative societies being particularly associated with working class education. And educational bodies and libraries were not confined to the larger towns of Halifax and Huddersfield; they also took root in small towns and villages.

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<sup>2</sup> See above 2.2.3, 2.3.1 and 2.3.2.

Although the development of working class education and culture was of note in an area of early industrialisation, there were a variety of different types of library whether of church, chapel, literary or educational institute, many of which were open to all irrespective of class. A few libraries held over 1,000 volumes. In 1866 the Halifax Circulating Library held over 15,000 volumes and the Huddersfield Subscription Library had over 10,000 volumes.<sup>3</sup> But they were not typical. Many were still small as exemplified by the libraries of the Huddersfield Sunday School Circuit covering nonconformist Sunday schools: in 1879 the average number of books was only 430.<sup>4</sup>

Many of these libraries although small by present day standards, were well used as surviving figures and comments indicate. Mechanics' institutes often had a high issue. The library of the Huddersfield Mechanics' Institution sometimes found it difficult to cope with demand. In 1844:

It has also been gratifying to us, to see the animation that exists amongst the members, on the nights the library is open; finding work for three and sometimes four persons to attend to them. It is no unusual occurrence to see twenty of the juvenile members calling out the number of the volume they want at any one time...<sup>5</sup>

This amply illustrates enthusiasm for libraries and reading. Sunday school libraries were similarly well used. 37 libraries on the Huddersfield Sunday School Circuit had a total issue of 42,888 in 1879. The average annual issue would be 1,159 per library.<sup>6</sup> Mechanics' institute libraries and Sunday school libraries were particularly

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<sup>3</sup> See above 5.4.1 and 5.4.2.

<sup>4</sup> See above Figure 6/IX.

<sup>5</sup> Huddersfield University Archives, HMI/1/1, Huddersfield Mechanics' Institution, *General Committee Minutes 1843-4, Annual Reports 1847-8*.

<sup>6</sup> See above Figure 6/IX.



important to working class education and were well used, perhaps because there were few alternatives. George Searle Phillips, educationalist and advocate of public libraries and secretary of Huddersfield Mechanics' Institution 1846-54, wrote:

Books are the largest educators, when we have said all we can for our schools and universities. I would have the home of every man, therefore, made sacred by the presence of these venerable worthies, whose names are the glories of literature and the pride of Christendom.<sup>7</sup>

A further illustration of the importance of libraries to education was the Woodside Library set up by Edward Akroyd for his workers. It was at first little used, until it was moved into the schoolroom of the Haley Hill Working Men's College and in effect changed from being a factory library to an education institute library. Working class education required considerable perseverance as it was carried on in addition to employment and in the case of women domestic duties and even children attending Sunday schools may have been working on weekdays hence *evening* classes and *Sunday* schools. Whether through solitary reading or attending classes, studying requires self-discipline. Self-help was a requisite to success and nowhere is this more apparent than the popularity of Samuel Smiles' book of that name, published in 1859.<sup>8</sup> Literature on good behaviour, morality and self-improvement was common in the nineteenth century especially in Sunday school libraries and the libraries of mutual improvement societies.

But not all was striving for overt education and self-improvement, as many libraries held fiction. And of course, the proportion of books on each subject in a

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<sup>7</sup> Mabel Pythian (Tylecote), January Searle in Yorkshire, 148.

<sup>8</sup> Samuel Smiles, *Self-help; With Illustrations of Conduct and Perseverance*.

library did not necessarily correspond with the proportion of issues so library catalogues are not always evidence of what was being actually read. In the library of the Huddersfield Philosophical Society, for example, 1847-8 a few scientific works had been borrowed, but periodicals and the works of Scott and Bulwer Lytton comprised over half the issue.<sup>9</sup> Halifax Circulating Library which held books on a variety of subjects, typified the trend toward fiction and from education to entertainment. As early as 1804 the loan of fiction was popular with Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, Richardson's *Clarissa*, Mrs. Radcliffe's *Romance of the Forest* and Fanny Burney's *Evelina*.<sup>10</sup> The Circulating Library amalgamated with the Halifax Literary and Philosophical Society Library in 1866. In the year 1881-2 the issue from the combined library was as high as 32,041, of which 81% was fiction. The library had an account with Mudie's Circulating Library suggesting that the demand for fiction was so high that there was a need to use another library.<sup>11</sup> Subscriptions to national circulating libraries like Mudie's and W.H. Smith's were quite common by the late nineteenth century. Even Anglican church institutes subscribed to Mudie's. Local commercial circulating libraries were businesses and existed to provide a livelihood rather than for educational and cultural reasons. They therefore would only be successful if they supplied works, which were popular and although there were special libraries, most provided light literature.

Even at a time when more people were able to read, access to libraries usually involved the payment of a subscription. Moreover, despite the expansion of

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<sup>9</sup> See above 5.5.3.

<sup>10</sup> See above 3.5.1.

<sup>11</sup> See above 5.5.2.

working class education, men were the beneficiaries of most libraries. Before the Education Act of 1870 making elementary education compulsory, girls were less likely than boys to be educated in day schools and there was often an emphasis on the teaching of subjects to prepare them for their domestic duties such as sewing. As a result more women were unable to read than men were. There were of course exceptions, for example, even as early as the seventeenth century Jonathan Priestley notes in his memoirs that his aunt Grace Wood (d.1688) owned books and taught her servants and apprentices to read.<sup>12</sup> In the early nineteenth century Anne Lister, Caroline Walker and Elizabeth Wadsworth, all of Halifax parish, kept diaries noting their studies and reading. Anne Lister was a member of Halifax Circulating Library.<sup>13</sup> Middle class women were more likely than working class women to be educated and to have time to read; yet even then they only made up a minority of the membership of middle class libraries. If few middle class women were members of these libraries working class women carrying out domestic duties and often working outside the home were hardly likely to fare any better.

Mechanics' institutes had many working men and youths as members, but fewer women. Huddersfield Mechanics' Institution, which had an outstanding reputation, did not have any women members. Instead there was a separate Female Educational Institute from 1846, which was merged with the main institution in 1883. The setting up of the institute, by its very existence, provides evidence of the

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<sup>12</sup> See above 2.1.

<sup>13</sup> See above 3.2 and 3.5.1.



recognition of the need to educate working class women, but facilities and attainments were not equal to those at the Mechanics' Institution. Any comparison between the size and loan rates of the libraries of the Mechanics' Institution in Huddersfield and its female counterpart serves to highlight the shortcomings in the education of women. From a female perspective certain questions could be asked: how many women used libraries? What did they read? And what effect did reading and libraries have on women? These questions remain largely unanswered as yet partly through insufficient evidence.

What was happening in Halifax and Huddersfield was happening elsewhere and this thesis covers libraries and associated subjects such as the book trade in a limited geographical area. The picture was similar in other parts of England, especially in the industrial north of England. Civic pride played a part in the spread of libraries with smaller towns following the example of larger ones. Travel, kinship and the press were all means of providing information on what was happening beyond the immediate locality. Thus the Halifax Circulating Library was formed in 1768, three months after the larger Leeds Library was established, and most of the library's rules were selected from the rules of the Liverpool Library and the Manchester Circulating Library. When the Huddersfield Subscription Library was formed in 1807, Mr. Whitacre, one of the founder members, was a nephew of the Reverend Dr. Henry Coulthurst, Vicar of Halifax, 1790-1817, who was at that time secretary of the Halifax Circulating Library. This suggests that advice from Halifax may have been sought. A later example of the desire to emulate other towns in the

1880s occurred when one argument put forward in favour of a public library in Huddersfield was that similar towns had them.<sup>14</sup>

Types of library were similar from large town to small town to village. The difference was rather one of scale. Not only were types similar, but they often had holdings in common. So libraries of the Society of Friends held only Quaker literature, which they purchased on the recommendation of the Yearly and Quarterly Meetings. Sunday school libraries held similar titles such as those of the Religious Tract Society. The Sunday School Union distributed 2,100 libraries of 100-200 books 1835-50 and the Religious Tract Society also gave away libraries.<sup>15</sup>

If library types were similar, it is far less time-consuming to research one narrowly defined area and assume the same was happening elsewhere than to research every library in England and beyond! Yet not all is uniformity, either in library type or content. In the area covered by this study the Huddersfield Mechanics' Institution, for example, was judged by contemporaries like Angus Bethune Reach to have been particularly successful and unusually Huddersfield also had a female educational institute. The number of mechanics' institutes was relatively high in the West Riding of Yorkshire, especially around Halifax and Huddersfield. According to the 1851 census there were more mechanics' institutes in the Huddersfield Registration District than in most other counties. The vast majority of these institutes had libraries.<sup>16</sup> Both the Halifax and Huddersfield areas were strong in Sunday school libraries. Todmorden Industrial Society had the largest

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<sup>14</sup> See above 3.5.1, 3.5.2 and E.3.

<sup>15</sup> See above 2.3.2, 3.8.4, 6.3 and 6.5.

<sup>16</sup> See above 5.7.1 and Figures 5/V and 5/VI.



co-operative library in Yorkshire in 1879.<sup>17</sup> So the area as a whole was well off in terms of libraries associated with industrialisation as might be expected. Besides being well supplied with some types of library, Halifax and Huddersfield also had others, which were absent in similar towns. Halifax had factory libraries as early as the 1850s. The Woodside and Copley libraries formed by Edward Akroyd and the Dean Clough Library formed by the Crossleys were in existence in 1859. Huddersfield had a foreign library society, a medical society library and the Huddersfield Archaeological and Topographical Association Library, which was later to become the Yorkshire Archaeological Society Library.

Simply to list these examples is to stress local and regional differences – to show how Halifax and Huddersfield differed from other towns. Did Halifax and Huddersfield have more libraries than other areas giving them a special place in library history? Or do the aforementioned examples serve to illustrate the differences between Halifax and Huddersfield and other areas? Many libraries and associated educational and cultural activities were flourishing in Halifax and Huddersfield, but they were also flourishing elsewhere and the strengths of certain libraries may merely have compensated for what was lacking in others.

Finally the heavy use made of some of these libraries provided clear evidence that reading and education were no longer the preserve of a few educated people. On the contrary such were the number of people using libraries that it seemed obvious to reformers that many would benefit from a more comprehensive public library service. Public libraries for all their hesitant beginnings made access

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<sup>17</sup> See above 5.11.1 and 5.11.3.



to books easier for those excluded from other libraries for financial and religious reasons. Nor were they simply another source of book provision among a wide variety of library types; their very size enabled them to replace some earlier libraries and as a consequence the pattern of library provision was to change in the twentieth century and beyond.

## **APPENDIX**

### **LIST OF LIBRARIES IN HALIFAX AND HUDDERSFIELD AND THE SURROUNDING AREAS**

This is a list of the libraries mentioned in the text within the geographical coverage of this study. I have found many other libraries in the course of my research, Sunday school libraries in particular, but I have only included those mentioned in the text. I have divided the libraries into secular and religious and then by library type which may be somewhat arbitrary in certain cases as many do not fit neatly into specific categories.

#### **SECULAR**

##### **Private Libraries**

Baines, Samuel  
Brooke, Sir Thomas  
Cameron, Richard  
Murgatroyd, John  
Priestley, William  
Savile, Sir Henry  
Turner, John

##### **School Libraries**

Almondbury Grammar School Library  
British School Library, Great Albion Street, Halifax  
Heath School Library, Halifax  
Hipperholme Grammar School Library  
Holme School Library, Almondbury  
Huddersfield and District Pupil Teachers' Library  
Huddersfield College Library  
Huddersfield National School Library  
Rishworth School Library  
Slaithwaite National School Library

##### **Book Clubs**

'Brighouse Book Society'(2)  
Almondbury Book Club  
Halifax Book Club  
Holmfirth Book Club

Honley Book Club  
Huddersfield Book Club  
Illingworth Reading Club and Debating Society  
Meltham Book Club

### **Subscription Libraries**

Brighouse Subscription Library  
Crosslee Library, Todmorden  
Halifax Circulating Library  
Halifax New Subscription Library  
Harleywood Library, Todmorden  
Huddersfield Subscription Library  
Luddenden Library  
Sowerby Library  
Toadcarr Library, Todmorden  
Todmorden Old Library

### **Literary and Philosophical Society Libraries**

Austonley Scientific Society Library  
Halifax Literary and Philosophical Society Library  
Huddersfield Literary and Scientific Society Library  
Huddersfield Philosophical Society Library  
Todmorden Athenaeum Library

### **Naturalists' Society Libraries**

'William Heaton and Young Men Nature Library, Luddenden'  
Huddersfield Naturalists' Society Library  
Rastrick and Brighouse Naturalists' Society Library  
Todmorden Botanical Society Library

### **Other Special Libraries**

Huddersfield Archaeological and Topographical Association / Yorkshire  
Archaeological Society Library  
Huddersfield Foreign Library Society  
Huddersfield Law Library  
Huddersfield Medical Society Library

### **Mechanics' Institute, Mutual Improvement Society and Other Adult Education Libraries**

Almondbury Mechanics' Institute Library  
Austonley Mechanics' Institute Library



Berry Brow Mechanics' Institute Library  
 Brighthouse Mechanics' Institute Library  
 Dean Clough Institute Library  
 Dogley Lane Mechanics' Institute Library  
 Elland Mechanics' Institute Library  
 Farnley Tyas Mechanics' Institute Library  
 Greetland Mechanics' Institute Library  
 Greetland Mutual Improvement Society Library  
 Haley Hill Working Men's College Library  
 Halifax Mechanics' Institution Library  
 Holmfirth Mechanics' Institution Library  
 Honley Mechanics' Institute Library  
 Honley Social Institution Library  
 Huddersfield Female Educational Institute Library  
 Huddersfield Mechanics' Institution Library  
 Huddersfield Scientific and Mechanic Institute Library  
 Kirkburton Mechanics' Institute Library  
 Kirkburton Mechanics' Institute Library<sup>\*</sup>  
 Kirkheaton Mechanics' Institute Library  
 Lindley Mechanics' Institute Library  
 Lockwood Mechanics' Institute Library  
 Longwood Mechanics' Institute Library  
 Marsden Mechanics' Institute Library  
 Meltham Mechanics' Institute Library  
 Meltham Mills Mechanics' Institute Library  
 Mixenden Mechanics' Institution Library  
 Netherthong Mechanics' Institute Library  
 Netherton Mechanics' Institute Library  
 Rastrick Mechanics' Institute Library  
 Shelley Mechanics' Institute Library  
 Shelley Mutual Improvement Society Library  
 Shepley Mechanics' Institute Library  
 Slaithwaite Mechanics' Institute Library  
 Southowram Mutual Improvement Society Library  
 Sowerby Bridge Mechanics' Institution Library  
 Thurstonland Mutual Improvement Society Library

## **Factory and Other Occupational Libraries**

Copley Free Library  
 Dean Clough Library  
 Frederic Schwann, Export Merchant Employees' Library  
 Woodside Library

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<sup>\*</sup> Two institutes with the same name

## **Commercial Circulating Libraries**

Bairstow, Joseph, Huddersfield  
Birtwhistle, T. and W., Halifax  
Brook, George and Joseph, Huddersfield  
Brook, Joseph, Huddersfield  
Brown, Benjamin, Huddersfield  
Clayton, Edwin, Huddersfield  
Dewhirst, William, Huddersfield  
Hobson, Joshua, Huddersfield  
Jagger, William, Halifax  
Kemp, Thomas, Huddersfield  
Leyland, Roberts, Halifax  
Lumb, James, Halifax  
McArthur, John, Halifax  
McArthur, Mary, Halifax  
Midgley, Ann, Halifax  
Midgley, William, Halifax  
Milner, Susannah, Halifax  
Moore, John, Huddersfield  
Nicholson, Joseph, Halifax  
Pilter, Robert, Huddersfield  
Riley, Thomas, Halifax  
Simpson, Martha, Halifax  
Thompson, James, Huddersfield  
Tinker, Christopher, Huddersfield  
Wheatley, James Eastwood, Huddersfield  
Wild, Joseph, Huddersfield  
Wood, Caroline, Halifax

## **Newsrooms**

Admiral Nelson Inn Newsroom, Halifax  
Buchanan, R. Newsroom and Coffee House, Huddersfield  
Castle Newsroom, Halifax  
Chartist Newsroom, Halifax  
Conservative Newsroom, Halifax  
Conservative Newsroom, Huddersfield  
Halifax Circulating Library Newsroom  
Halifax Exchange Newsroom  
Halifax Mechanics' Institution Library Newsroom  
Halifax New Subscription Library Newsroom  
Huddersfield Commercial Newsroom  
Shakespear[e] Newsroom, Halifax  
Talbot Newsroom, Halifax  
Upper George Inn Newsroom, Halifax

## **Co-operative Society Libraries**

Halifax Industrial Society Library  
Huddersfield Industrial Society Library  
Kirkheaton Reading Room  
Outlane Reading Room  
Todmorden Industrial Society Library

## **Public Libraries**

Brighouse Public Library  
Halifax Public Library  
Huddersfield Public Library  
Sowerby Bridge Public Library  
Todmorden Public Library

## **RELIGIOUS**

### **Private Libraries**

Ferrett, Joseph  
Heywood, Oliver  
Hough, John  
Legh, George  
Meeke, Robert  
Philipson, Carus  
Shaw, Syvanus  
Wadsworth, Elizabeth

### **Church of England Libraries**

Cross Stone Church Institution Library, Todmorden  
Halifax Church Institute Library  
Halifax Parish Church Library  
Holmfirth Church of England Literary Association Library  
Huddersfield Church Institute Library  
Meeke and Walker's Institution Library, Slaithwaite  
Parker Library, Slaithwaite  
Shepley Church of England Literary Association Library  
Slaithwaite Church Lending Library  
Slaithwaite Church Library  
St. Mary's Church, Bray Library, Illingworth  
St. Peter's Church Library, Huddersfield



## **Methodist Libraries**

Hanover Road Methodist New Connexion Chapel Library, Halifax  
Holmfirth Wesleyan Literary Society Library  
Kirkburton Wesleyan Literary Society Library  
Siddal Wesleyan Methodist Chapel Young Men's Class Library  
Sowerby Local Preachers' Library  
Stones Wesleyan Methodist Chapel Mutual Improvement Society Library, Ripponden

## **Baptist Libraries**

Heptonstall General Book Society  
Wainsgate Baptist Church Circulating Library, Hebden Bridge

## **Congregational, Independent and Unitarian Libraries**

Harrison Road Congregational Chapel Library, Halifax  
Highfield Congregational Church Book Society, Huddersfield  
Highfield Congregational Church Library, Huddersfield  
Milton Congregational Church Library (for junior scholars), Huddersfield  
Milton Congregational Church Library (for teachers and elder scholars), Huddersfield  
Northgate-End Unitarian Chapel Book Society, Halifax  
Northgate-End Unitarian Chapel Library, Halifax  
Ramsden Street Independent Chapel Library, Huddersfield  
Todmorden Unitarian Church Periodical Library

## **Society of Friends' Libraries**

Brighouse Monthly Meeting Library  
Brighouse Preparative Meeting Library  
Halifax Preparative Meeting Library  
Huddersfield Preparative Meeting Library

## **Roman Catholic Library**

Catholic Association Rooms Library, Halifax

## **Sunday School Libraries**

Blackshaw Head Wesleyan Methodist Chapel Sunday School Library  
Ebenezer Primitive Methodist Chapel Sunday School Scholars' Library, Halifax

**Ebenezer Primitive Methodist Chapel Sunday School Teachers' Library, Halifax**  
**Halifax Sunday School Union Teachers' Reference Library**  
**Highfield Independent Sunday School Library**  
**Hope Baptist Church Sunday School Library, Hebden Bridge**  
**Lindley Methodist New Connexion Sunday School Library**  
**Lindwell Primitive Methodist Chapel Teachers' Library, Greetland**  
**Lockwood Rehoboth Baptist Church Sunday School Library**  
**Luddenden Foot United Methodist Chapel Sunday School Library**  
**Lumbutts United Methodist Sunday School Library**  
**Mill Bank Wesleyan Methodist Sunday School Library**  
**Paddock Congregational Sunday School Library**  
**Paddock Wesleyan Methodist Sunday School Library**  
**Park Methodist Church, Sunday School Library, Brighouse**  
**Queen Street Wesleyan Methodist Chapel Sunday School Library, Huddersfield**  
**Ramsden Street Independent Chapel Sunday School Library, Huddersfield**  
**Rooley Lane Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, Sunday School Library, Sowerby**  
**Scout Road Wesleyan Methodist Chapel Sunday School Library, Mytholmroyd**  
**Sowerby New Road Primitive Methodist Chapel Sunday School Library**  
**Todmorden York Street Wesleyan Chapel Sunday School Teachers' Library**

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**Elland cum Greetland**

EMR:32-4, Bethesda Methodist New Connexion/United Methodist.

EMR:93, 97-100, 152-65, Elland Wesleyan.

MISC:375, Lindwell Primitive Methodist.

EMR:283-4, Thornfield Wesleyan/United Methodist Free Church/United Methodist.

**Halifax**

MR:257, Broad Street Wesleyan.

EPM:5, HM:40, Ebenezer Primitive Methodist.

MISC:287/5, Gibbet Road Primitive Methodist.

MISC:57/3-4, Hanover Street Methodist New Connexion/United Methodist.

SA:24, 61-2, 66, North Parade Salem Methodist New Connexion/United Methodist.

MR:167, Queen's Road Fairfield Primitive Methodist.

MISC:287/40, Queen's Road St. Andrew Methodist New Connexion/United Methodist.

BRU:1, Rhodes Street, Brunswick United Methodist Free Church/United Methodist.

MISC:481/5, 18, South Parade Wesleyan.

**Heptonstall**

UC:19-22, 29-30, 33-8, 58, 63, Heptonstall Wesleyan.

MISC:397, Highgate Wesleyan.

HB:25, Hebden Bridge Salem Wesleyan.

### **Hipperholme cum Brighouse**

BET:1, Bethel Methodist New Connexion/United Methodist.

PA:3, Brighouse Wesleyan.

PA:6-8, 16, 56-61, Park Methodist New Connexion/United Methodist.

PA:105-6, St. Paul's Wesleyan.

### **Langfield**

MISC:654, Lumbutts Wesleyan/United Methodist Free Church/United Methodist.

TM:153, 174/1, Mankinholes Wesleyan.

TM:144, Springside Wesleyan.

### **Midgley**

UC:73-4, 101, Midgley Methodist New Connexion/United Methodist.

### **Norland**

CSB:19, 22-3, Mount Pleasant United Methodist Free Church/United Methodist.

### **Northowram**

CLM:48, 50, Boothtown Road Primitive Methodist.

### **Ovenden**

IMO:1, Illingworth Moor Wesleyan Methodist.

MZ:11, Mount Zion Wesleyan/Methodist New Connexion/United Methodist.

MISC:875/5, Ovenden Wesleyan.

### **Southowram**

MISC:684/5, Siddal Wesleyan.

ME:9, 14, 38-9, Southowram Church Lane United Methodist Free Church/United Methodist.

### **Sowerby**

SBM:7, 9, Mill Bank Wesleyan.

HB:86, 88-9, 105-6, Mytholmroyd Mount Zion Primitive Methodist.

HB:34/1, 36, Cragg Vale Providence Wesleyan.

CSB:28, Rooley Lane Wesleyan.

HB:109, 116, MY 1-3, 57, 94-102, Mytholmroyd Scout Road Wesleyan.

SB:174, Sowerby New Road Primitive Methodist.

## **Soyland**

SB:194, Soyland Ebenezer Methodist New Connexion/United Methodist.  
SB:218-9, 225-6, Ripponden Stones Wesleyan.

## **Stansfield**

MISC:394/1, Blackshaw Head Wesleyan.  
TM:123, Rodwell End Wesleyan Methodist.  
TM:2/1, 29-31, 37-8, 48, Todmorden York Street Wesleyan.

## **Todmorden cum Walsden**

WIK:15, WM:81-2, 88-93, Inchfield Bottom United Methodist Free Church/United Methodist.  
TM:114, Knowlwood and Shade Primitive Methodist.  
WIK:6, Shade Wesleyan.

## **Warley**

HB:58, Luddenden Dean Wesleyan.  
HB:72-3, 76, Luddenden Foot United Methodist.

## **Baptist Churches**

BBC:7-9, Birchcliffe, Hebden Bridge.  
HBR:5-10, Heptonstall Slack.  
SL:79-80, Steep Lane, Sowerby.

## **Congregational Church**

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KC295/29, Dalton St. Paul's.

KC205/10, Golcar Providence Methodist New Connexion.

NM/HSC/IX/1, Honley Wesleyan.

NM/HWC/1a, 1f, Huddersfield Brunswick Street United Methodist Free Church.

NM/QSM/2-4, NM/QSMSS/2-3, Huddersfield Queen Street Wesleyan.

KC84/3-4, 9-12, Lindley Zion New Connexion.

NM/HSC/XX/3-4, Lockwood Methodist New Connexion.

NM/L/16, Longwood.

NM/M/1, 14, Marsden Wesleyan.

NM/WM/P/2/1, 3-6, Paddock Wesleyan Methodist.

KC294/4/7, 8/1/1, Slaithwaite Carr Lane.

**Huddersfield Wesleyan Methodist Sunday School Union:**

N/QSMSS/1, *Secretary's Minute Book for the First Circuit Instituted March 29th 1859-74.*

**Linthwaite Wesleyan Day School:**

NM/HSC/VIII/1, *Cash Book 1871-81.*

**Congregational/Independent/Unitarian Churches:**

Ni/HM/1, Honley Moorbottom Independent.

Ni/Hi/3a/2, 6b/1, 7a/1, 12/1-2, Huddersfield Highfield Congregational/Independent.

Ni/M/28, Huddersfield Milton Street Congregational.

Ni/RS/8-12, Huddersfield Ramsden Street Independent.

Ni/HU/1, Huddersfield Unitarian.

Ni/MA/2/1-2, Marsden Congregational.

**Baptist Church:**

NB/R4-11, Lockwood Rehoboth.

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Mill Hill Unitarian Chapel, Leeds, 66, Library Committee Rules and Minute Book 1843-87.

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